

Inner Dynamics of Guru Granth Sahib

Editor

DR. S.P. SINGH



**Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar**

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Editor

Dr. S.P. Singh
Vice-Chancellor
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

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CONTENTS

♦	Introduction	1
1.	Religions and Spirituality <i>–Bhai Harbans Lal</i>	5
2.	Gurbani's Concept of Suffering <i>–Dr. Darshan Singh</i>	36
3.	Dialogical Human Reality and Sri Guru Granth Sahib <i>–Dr. Jodh Singh</i>	44
4.	Musicological Study of the Adi Guru Granth <i>–Dr. Kirpal Singh</i>	52
5.	The Interfaith Movement : Call of a larger God <i>–Elizabeth Espersen</i>	65
6.	18th Century European Perspective of the Sikhs and their Scripture <i>–Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon</i>	81
7.	Ethical Values in Guru Granth Sahib <i>–Dr. Jaswinder Kaur Dhillon</i>	97
8.	Truth as the Supreme Reality in Sri Guru Granth Sahib <i>–Dr. Gurnam Kaur</i>	111
9.	Sri Guru Granth Sahib : A Juristic Person <i>–Dr. Kashmir Singh</i>	121
10.	Socio-Religious Context of truth as depicted in Guru Granth Sahib <i>–Dr. Jasbir Singh Sabar</i>	131

11.	Sri Guru Granth's Methodology in Analysing Issues : An Overview <i>—Dr. Balwant Singh</i>	137
12.	Nam Simran as an Interfaith Unifier <i>—Dr. S. S. Dhanoo</i>	143
13.	Status of Bhagat Bani in Guru Granth Sahib <i>—Dr. Shashi Bala</i>	151
14.	Fundamental Issues of Human Consciousness and Religion <i>—Dr. Manmohan Singh</i>	165
15.	All Languages Meditate on Vahiguru <i>—Dr. Harinder Singh</i>	177

Introduction

Guru Granth Sahib, acknowledged as the most sacrosanct object, a sacred scripture enjoying profound veneration, carries unrivalled canonical status in the history of religious texts. From it, emanates the human identity and coherence. Its doctrinal formulations have stood the rigorous tests of the fast advancing scientific and technological age. Its vision of man and society, visualised by the first Guru — Guru Nanak and fertilised by his experiences of the world, has become universally acceptable currency of religious discourse. The vision was crystallised further by his equally worthy successors. Under these Great Masters, the traditional social order and culture, alongwith the religious structure underwent a desirable change.

A rare combination of precept and practice, thought and action characterised the writings of the Great Masters. It is, through the medium of Guru Granth Sahib that this combination is displayed. The religious philosophy as such became intelligible and acceptable to the world at large, most particularly to those sections of Indian society which were debarred from taking to scholarly pursuits; it is because the humanely oriented literary contributions in the Guru Granth Sahib were bestowed with intellectual strength and vitality par excellent.

The Great Gurus, the Bhagats, the Saints courageously put themselves to a searching critique of the social, political and religious

system. Whatever was found superficial, flimsy, imprecise and indefensible was vigorously condemned and discarded. The founder of the Faith initiated the practice of holding constant and critical dialogue with other traditions so as to ward off the parochial, complacent and cramped effects of the dead wood. Objective was to add still more to the beauty of wonderful existence of man on earth. Ailments like historical amnesia, political schizophrenia and religious inertia were thoroughly diagnosed and accordingly treated. Insights into the range and variety of human potentialities were astounding.

Human unity, human sociality and human dignity are the core components of the religious philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib. The Great Masters were intensely sensitive to the fact that the core was being vandalised. They were sensitive to all forms of oppressions and exploitation. Hence, they were the divinely ordained champions and spokesmen of the poor, the oppressed and victims of the established order everywhere. They saw through the hidden mechanisms of oppression. Powerlessness of the powerless was a curse. So was their ignorance. But the Great Masters tell that the curse was not divine, it was man made. The rulers of the time had created unfounded illusions about it. The victims were deliberately kept ignorant, the Great Masters told. Guru Granth Sahib is a reservoir of central and abiding truths. It carries the agenda of regeneration of Indian society in particular and the international community in general. The degenerate and the diseased authorities, both political and religious, get a befitting rebuff.

The values of life as enunciated in the Guru Granth Sahib, are truthfulness, honesty, mutual trust and loyalty, productive labour and communal sharing, gratitude and integrity of conduct, authentic living, and, above all, spiritual transformations that raise man to "spiritual

marriage” wherein a God filled man returns to society for its service and edification.

The Guru Granth teaches that it is not the intellectual formula or verbal assent to it that liberates man, but the deed and his quality of living. “Truth is higher than everything but higher still is truthful living.”

Central teaching of the Guru Granth is that the fully integrated person, the liberated individual must revert to the world and society to participate in its activities to guide and assist it in striving for achieving a situation in which human mind is free, authentic living is facilitated and individuals may evolve into “deified men.”

The Guru Granth furnishes the answers to the vexing questions: “Must the graceful ones become lionised or remain meek and humble? What is the relation of exemplary violence to exemplary martyrdom? How can falsehood disappear? How will the people’s participation become the guiding principle of governance? How will the distinction between high and low evaporate? How is a balance to be struck between ‘being’ and ‘doing’, ‘wisdom’ and ‘inner certitude’?”

The central injunction of the Gurus to a Sikh, as well as to the mankind is that (1) the basic factor in human society is the individual, (2) valuable creative efforts are possible only if this core is kept free, and (3) freedom consists in the extinction of selfishness rather than the inflation of his ego.

The Guru Granth possesses the key to the happiness and peaceful co-existence of the entire human race. It is a religion with a message of hope and optimism. Adherence to its principles and teachings will prevent clash of civilisations. Its adherents waged relentless struggles in the cause of righteousness. They could survive even in the most inhospitable environment, they demonstrated.

Courage, bravery, discipline, self-respect were their hallmarks. Charity, worship and hard work are the other ones. It is because of this courageous trajectory that Sikh religion holds the promise of being the religion of the world; so is the sacred scripture —The Guru Granth Sahib. The institutions of Sangat and Pangat, the three props —naam japna, wand chhakna and kirt karni, the unending line of martyrs first started by the composer of Guru Granth Sahib itself and continued by the ninth Master signify the fact that Guru Granth Sahib is a perennial source of faith and equanimity. It propagates the religion of humanity. It stresses upon the family life and community obligations and not a life of an ascetic and aimless wanderer.

• Guru Nanak Dev University is organising the fourth International Seminar on Guru Granth Sahib. The part of the proceedings of the first three seminars make the body of the present volume. It carries excellent studies by renowned scholars. Very relevant aspects of the Holy Scripture have been analytically discussed. Truth, ethical values, status of Bhagat Bani in the Guru Granth Sahib, linguistic aspect, musicology, legal aspect as seen in the question of juristic person. Scriptural studies, historical milieu, vast canvas of the Holy Scripture, canonization aspect, relevance of the scripture in the scientific age, all these topics form the focus of study.

The volume is a humble edition to existing literature on Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Nanak Dev University
Amritsar

S.P. Singh
Vice-Chancellor

Religions and Spirituality

—Bhai Harbans Lal

The holy city of Amritsar was founded four centuries ago to overcome the conflict among and between religions, between heaven and Earth, the sacred and the secular, and the human and the divine. Here the presence of Guru pervades the whole community. This city enjoys the beauty and harmony of the Garden of Eden. In the heart of the city is the spring of “the water of life” that is bright as crystal and that produces ripples that flow through every heart. In the center of the water is the temple of sacred that emanate continuous vibrations for the healing of the people. You are invited to “take the water of life” as a gift. It is the free gift of God to humanity.

You are leaders who chose your careers as scholars, ministers, teachers, and social or religious activists at a time when the need for faith, wisdom, love and compassion has never been greater. People are hungry for a vision and liberating truth, and our world desperately needs healing and renewal. In this generation, the fundamental task of religious and educational leadership is to find “the spring of the water of life” and to help make it flow through the middle of our villages, towns, and cities so that all people are equitably nourished, and the greater community of life is purified and sustained. Building spiritual societies locally and a faith civilization globally is fundamental to making “the water of life” to flow through our communities. Thus, the challenges and opportunities before you are

immense; so are the rays of light coming from the Guru of Sri Harmander Sahib; they are there to guide you in your undertaking.

The title of my remarks is Religions and Spirituality. Let me re-paraphrase it in the words of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It can be stated as :

ਮੰਨੈ ਮਗੁ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਪੰਥੁ॥ ਮੰਨੈ ਧਰਮ ਸੇਤੀ ਸਨਬੰਧੁ॥

mannai mag na chalai panth. mannai Dharam saytee san-banDh. The convinced faithful neither adopt the rigid paths nor they follow the religiosity of any religion. The faithful steadfastly connect to the essence of the all-sustaining spirituality.

I want to consider the elements of diversity in religious traditions and the spiritual significance of this diversity, which is becoming the basis of a sweeping interfaith activism world over.

History of Religions and spirituality

The Origin

Among the four innate tendencies of human beings (see below) the first is to conform to a worldly discipline, the most prevailing such discipline in the history has been the religion. Religion here means a human construct to relate to the Divine through cultural practices. It is discovered by a founder and promoted by followers who encrust it with rituals and rules over time, and which periodically needs to be “cleaned up” often leading to birth of a new religion or a new variety of the same religion.

Starting from the beginning, religions were evolved to promote the spirituality meaning a practical understanding and practice of a relationship between the human being and the Creative Soul, Karta Purakh. For example Sri Guru Granth Sahib refers to the central thrust of the religious teachers as,

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝਾਈਐ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ 18)

gurmukh man samjaa-ee-ai aatam raam beechaar.

Those who are oriented to the Divine teachers, their minds were tutored for the discourses on Cosmic Soul.

ਕਾਇਆ ਮਹਲੁ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਘਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਖੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਪਾਰ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ 1256)

kaa-i-aa mahal mandar ghar har kaa tis meh raakhee jot apaar.

The body is a mansion, a temple, the home of the Creative Soul ; He has infused His Infinite Light into it.

The second purpose of a religion was to rescue the human mind from Maya and images of Pseudo-Self formed under its influence. Maya is the materialism that is deceptive and illusory and that lures human souls away from the Divine reality. Under its influence the Creator is forgotten, worldly attachments take root and the duality becomes the object of interest. The Granth defines it as

ਏਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਾਇਆ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੩, ਪੰਨਾ 921)

ayh maa-i-aa jit har visrai moh upjai bhaa-o doojaa laa-i-aa.

This is Maya, by which Lord is forgotten; emotional attachment and love of duality well up.

Guru Granth tells us that when one is born with an innate tendency to seek four life objectives, one finds oneself walled in the house of Maya, the great illusion of a Pseudo-Self :

ਚਾਰਿ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਲੈ ਜਗਿ ਆਇਓ॥ ਸਿਵ ਸਕਤੀ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਪਾਇਓ॥

ਏਕੁ ਵਿਸਾਰੈ ਤਾ ਪਿਤ ਹਾਰੈ ਅੰਧੁਲੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਾ ਹੇ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, 1027)

*chaar padaarath laijagaa-i-aa, siv sakte ghar vaasaa
paa-i-aa, aykvisaaray*

taa pirh haaray an Dhulai naam visaaraa hay.

The humans are born with an inborn drive to secure four life objectives (dharam, arth, kam, mokh); thus, they start living within the walls of Maya (illusion). In addition, as they are blinded by the darkness of Maya, they forget about the numenon NAAM and lose contact with the Cosmic Creative Self leading to a defeat in the purpose of this life.

We value four goals above all else, and devote almost all of our energies to reach them. I have already described the first one as the basis of an ethnic religion. Second, arth is to own as many material possessions as possible. Third, kaam, is to make mind as storehouse of desires. The fourth goal, mokh is to gain some pseudo-spiritual power, desire for which to a certain extent follows from wealth and social position. The latter also requires acquisition of a personal aura and associated actions that evoke fear and respect from one's peers. Wealth, esteem and the ability to instill fear are all forms of power that a person strives for under the slavery of ego and Maya. This is the biggest impediment toward the Reality. The Guru described the beginning of cultural prisons as follows.

ਜੈਸੀ ਅਗਨਿ ਉਦਰ ਮਹਿ ਤੈਸੀ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮਾਇਆ॥

ਮਾਇਆ ਅਗਨਿ ਸਭ ਇਕੋ ਜੇਹੀ ਕਰਤੈ ਖੇਲੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ॥

ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਪਰਵਾਰਿ ਭਲਾ ਭਾਇਆ॥

ਲਿਵ ਛੁੜਕੀ ਲਗੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਅਮਰੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ॥

ਏਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਾਇਆ॥

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੀ ਤਿਨੀ ਵਿਚੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਪਾਇਆ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, 18)

*jaissee agan udarmeh taisee baahar maa-i-aa, maa-i-aa
 agan sabh ikojayhee kartai khayl rachaa-i-aa. jaa lis
 bhaanaa laa jammi-aaparvaar bhalaa bhaa-i-aa. liv
 chhurhkee lagee tarisnaa maa-i-aa amar vartaa-i-aa. ayh
 maa-i-aa jit har visrai moh upjai bhaa-o-doojaa laa-i-
 aa, kahai naanak gurparsaadee jinaa liv laagee tinee
 vichay maa-i-aa paa-i-aa.*

*As is the fire within the womb, so is Maya outside. The
 fire of Maya is one and the same; the Creator has staged
 this play. As is the Pleasure of His Will, so are we born,
 and the family is so very jubilant. -Love for the Lord wears
 off, and the child becomes attached to desires; the script
 of Maya runs its course. This is Maya, by which the Lord
 is forgotten, and attachment and love of duality wells up.
 Says Nanak, by Guru's Grace, those who enshrine love
 for the Lord, find Him, in the midst of Maya.*

Guru Arjan describes the myth created by our popular cultures and mythology lay down the basis of our pseudo-self under illusions of Maya and is the cause of all our ailments.

ਬਿਆਪਤ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਬਿਸਥਾਰ॥ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਸੁਰਗ ਨਰਮ ਅਵਤਾਰ॥
 ਬਿਆਪਤ ਧਨ ਨਿਰਧਨ ਪੇਖਿ ਸੋਭਾ॥ ਮੂਲੁ ਬਿਆਪੀ ਬਿਆਪਸਿ ਲੋਭਾ॥੧॥
 ਮਾਇਆ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਬਹੁ ਪਰਕਾਰੀ॥ ਸੰਤ ਜੀਵਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਓਟ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
 ਬਿਆਪਤ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਕਾ ਮਾਤਾ॥ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਰਾਤਾ॥
 ਬਿਆਪਤ ਹਸਤਿ ਘੋੜੇ ਅਰੁ ਬਸਤਾ॥ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਰੂਪ ਜੋਬਨ ਮਦ ਮਸਤਾ॥੨॥
 ਬਿਆਪਤ ਭੂਮਿ ਰੰਕ ਅਰੁ ਰੰਗਾ॥ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਗੀਤ ਨਾਦ ਸੁਣਿ ਸੰਗਾ॥
 ਬਿਆਪਤ ਸੇਜ ਮਹਲ ਸੀਗਾਰ॥ ਪੰਚ ਦੂਤ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਅੰਧਿਆਰ॥੩॥
 ਬਿਆਪਤ ਕਰਮ ਕਰੈ ਹਉ ਫਾਸਾ॥ ਬਿਆਪਤਿ ਗਿਰਸਤ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਉਦਾਸਾ॥
 ਆਚਾਰ ਬਿਉਹਾਰ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਇਹ ਜਾਤਿ॥ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਬਿਆਪਤ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗ ਰਾਤ॥੪॥
 ਸੰਤਨ ਕੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਕਾਟੇ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ॥ ਤਾ ਕਉ ਕਹਾ ਬਿਆਪੈ ਮਾਇ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨਿ ਧੂਰਿ ਸੰਤ ਪਾਈ॥ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਮਾਈ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੫, 182)

*bi-aapat aha-buDh kaa maataa. bi-aapat putar kaltar
sang raataa. bi-aapat hasat ghorhay ar bastaa. bi-aapat
roopjoban mad mastaa. bi-aapat bhoom rank or rangaa.
bi-aapat geet naad sun sangaa, bi-aapat sayj mhal
seegaar. panch doot bi-aapat anDhi-aar. bi-aapat karam
karai ha-o-faasa. bi-aapat girsat bi-aapat daasaa.
aachaar bi-uhaar bi-aapat ihjaat. sabh kichh bi-aapat
bin har rang raat. santan kay banDhan kaatay har raa-
ay. taa ka-o kahaa bi-aapai maa-ay, kaho naanakjin
Dhoor santpaa-ee. taa kai nikat na aavai maa-ee.*

*The environment of illusion (Maya1) afflicts us through
the expression of pleasure and pain. It afflicts us through
the heavens, the hell, the gods. It afflicts the rich and
the poor alike through desire for glory. Through the basic
malady of greed, Maya afflicts us in many many ways.
The saints alone live under Your Protection, God ||1||
Pause || It afflicts us through intoxication with intellectual
pride. It afflicts us through the love of children and spouse.
It afflicts us through material possessions such as
elephants, horses and beautiful clothes. It afflicts us
through the intoxication of the wine of beauty and youth.
||2|| It afflicts landlords, paupers and lovers of pleasure.
It afflicts us through the sweet sounds of music and
parties. It afflicts us through beautiful beds, palaces and
decorations. It afflicts us through the darkness of the five
evil passions. ||3|| It envelops those who act, entangled
in ego. It afflicts us through household affairs, and it
afflicts us in renunciation. It afflicts us through character,
lifestyle and social status. It afflicts us through everything,
except for those who are imbued with the Love of the*

Lord. ||4|| The Sovereign Lord King has cut away the bonds of His Saint. How can Maya cling to him? Says Nanak, Maya does not draw near to one who has obtained the dust of the feet of the Saints.

With emerging technologies and the resulting materialistic abundance, our experience with the culture of illusions is increasing. In every moment of the waking hours, we witness the make-believe world of the mega accomplishments of modern materialism. At the tantalizing prime-times of television, the illusory benefits of materialistic mirage dance in front of us like shadows on the wall of Plato's cave. Further, this mass-media culture is market-driven that makes us forget real purpose of our human life. Here it has become so easy to forget who we are and where we came from. The fabricated image of an illusionary person mesmerizes us. Instead of the search for reality, we look in the mirror at our designer clothes and our celebrity turbans to define ourselves. The environments of the unreal images of materialistic immense easily distract us. We are like the female elephant who gets so absorbed by the desire for attraction of the illusionary male that she loses her freedom in the hands of captors.

ਮਾਯਾ ਮੋਹੀ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਕਲਿ ਕਲ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਭ ਭਰਮਾਈ ॥

Like the intoxicated in sensuality the female elephant loses freedom in the hands of captors so has the entire civilization in this age has succumbed to intoxication of Maya and lost out to the delusions.

Today's average citizen is losing spiritual freedom in becoming a competitive and wealth-accumulating machine. His/her life's preoccupation is essentially acquisitive and consuming and not sharing or caring. The heart of today's human being may be never touched

by spirituality. This situation is coming a full circle from what was five centuries ago. According to Bhai Gurdas

ਉਠੀ ਗਲਾਨ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਹਉਮੈ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਲੇ ਲੁਕਾਈ ॥
 ਕੋਈ ਨ ਕਿਸੇ ਪੂਜਦਾ ਉਚ ਨੀਚ ਸਭ ਗਤਿ ਬਿਸਰਾਈ ॥
 ਭਏ ਬਿਅਦਲੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਕਲਿਕਾਤੀ ਉਮਰਾਵ ਕਸਾਈ ॥
 ਰਹਿਆ ਤਪਾਵਸ ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਜੁਗੀ ਚੌਥੇ ਜੁਗ ਜੋ ਦੇਇ ਸੁ ਪਾਈ ॥
 ਕਰਮ ਭ੍ਰਸ਼ਟ ਸਭ ਭਈ ਲੁਕਾਈ ॥

Hatred has sprung up in this world and the people are being consumed in ego. No one respects any one else or their deities. The emperors are tyrants and their satraps are butchers. The justice has become extinct, Whosoever can bribe buys the justice. The humankind has become wanting in dexterity of action.

The purpose of the religion was to help us take off the distorting glasses that we have grown accustomed to wearing, and look at what is happening from a spiritual perspective.

Sources of Diversity

Religion and Culture

Objective of the founder of every world religion throughout the history of humankind has been to teach spirituality to people. Spirituality was defined as the knowledge of oneself and one's relationship to the cosmic soul. Only what was varied from time to time was the medium of transmittal to the faithful and the ways were varied to suit specific communities; these ways were termed as a religion. This variation was imperative to make a religion suitable for the people of different periods of the earth's history. The Guru supported this hypothesis by saying that,

ਨਿਆਰੇ ਨਿਆਰੇ ਦੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਭੇਸਨ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਓ ਹੈ ॥

To illustrate the occurrence of diversity among religions but with

a common underlying goal, the authors of the Guru Granth described the practices of each religion as such. We may mention some of those sayings as below :

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਾਲਾਹਨਿ ਦਰਸਨਿ ਰੂਪਿ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥
 ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਹਿ ਅਰਚਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਅਗਰ ਵਾਸੁ ਬਹਕਾਰੁ॥
 ਜੋਗੀ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਧਿਆਵਨਿ ਜੇਤੇ ਅਲਖ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ॥
 ਸੂਖਮ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਾ ਆਕਾਰੁ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, 466)

*hindoo saalaahē saalaahan darsan roop apaar. tirath
 naaveh archaa poojaa agar vaas behkaar. jogee sunn Dhi-
 aavan jaytay alakh naam kartaar. sookham moorat naam
 niranjan kaa-i-aa kaa aakar.*

*The Hindus praise the Praiseworthy Lord through His
 countless forms. They bathe at sacred shrines of
 pilgrimage, making offering of flowers, and burning
 incense before idols of those forms. The Yogis mediate
 on the absolute Lord through uncountable names of the
 same Greater Lord. The Lord is the subtle image within
 and His numenon is Immaculate whom they aply the form
 of a body.*

In the beginning, it was customary to evolve the mythical stories in order to explain every religion. It became traditional to answer questions by the best stories a wise man could invent in an effort to give order to their religious system. Thus, the mythical stories of all religions deal with the life issues of a period, and they often arrive at the logical conclusion that there must be a God responsible for the order. In the primitive times, this type of logic given by clergy made sense as is illustrated by a Hungarian story rephrased below.

*Peasants living in the tiny hamlets of the Hungarian plains
 were proud to tell visitor: "Did you know that our village*

is the center of the world? You can check it out for yourself easily enough. All you have to do is go to the square in the middle of the village. In the middle of the square is the church. If you climb its tower, you can see the fields and forests spreading out in a circle all around, with our church in the center. "The fact that the neighbouring villages also thought they were at the hub of the world didn't matter-after all, what did foreigners living on the periphery of the universe know? Such delusions were taken seriously. These traditional peasants based their views perfectly-sensible bits of information : when they were looking down from the church spire, the village did in fact look as if it stood at the center of the world. All traditions based on these observations they learned in infancy from their elders and they held a stronger truth-value than anything they learned later. From their isolated vantage point, the reality they knew made perfectly good sense.

Unfortunately, every ethnic or regional religion propagated by their wise men must teach the same locally plausible yet ultimately erroneous hypothesis. Don't we hear every day from our churches that their scriptures were much more originated from the lips of the God than any one else. "After all," they say, "everyone knows that their prophet was sent by the one God Himself assigning a special position higher than any other prophet." It does no good to point out to them that in such a case every one in this world would have heard the same exclusive commandment from one God. It only confuses them and makes them irritated to invoke ex-communications. For every human group not only is led to believe itself is to be at the center of the universe, but also that it has unique virtues that

make it somehow superior to any other group. Every narrowly organized religion instills a similar prejudice in its members. We ourselves are certainly not immune to such myopia. Some of it is just amusing.

Over time when populations expanded to different lands and there was a breakdown in communication due primarily to great distances that separated people, many local or ethnic religions sprang up. They utilized their own vernaculars and histories to evolve the mythical stories of their own. the purpose was to develop their own rules for living that allowed people to lead a coherent existence in their own limited environment. In time, these rules became ingrained in the respective societies and they were adopted as the foundation of many ancient cultures. Thereafter, culture that human kind invented underlined the religious practices. The relationship between local cultures and the respective religions began to play irrecoverable role in our religious history. It survived and was nurtured because it played a useful role. We would be a very different kind of animal if our ancestors had failed to imagine a purposeful relationship with anthropomorphic cosmos. The phenomenal success of the religion in establishing an order in the past cannot be underrated; this will be the reason that most people of the this century would opt for a religion over any other alternative to furnish the life-discipline in their society.

When Prophets are Replaced by Cleric Caretakers

We are grateful for many prophets who appeared and promoted religions to teach us spirituality. However, history takes its own toll on every blessing. In religions it is the development of a cleric class that must be installed as caretakers once the prophet leaves the scene. The original purpose was to protect and promote the culture of religion that propagated spirituality. However, our experience is in the contrary.

Whereas founders of the most of the religions meant to connect human beings to the Universal Divine on a cosmic basis, many caretakers of the religious treasures considered religion as a commodity of commerce or trade for profit. Further, they found it profitable to prescribe ethnic rules that promoted exclusivity and thus were divisive. Often the clergy would ill define a unique deity to worship and to elevate themselves as the exclusive interpreters of the message. There are several examples.

Often our priests condition us to derive self-esteem from those who are professional preachers as opposed to the enlightened souls who have achieved the contentment and not looking for new converts to build their wealth. We are taught that we must pay heed to the instructions transmitted through the clergy in order to grow up in our religious traditions. This is from where we should learn how to dress, read, and even think. To attire, look like our prophets and, in their speech of ignorance, claim to speak the prophets' language even though many of them hardly invested any time to acquire any scholarship or skills to manage any intellectual matter. Therefore, in the absence of any modern education, they must propagate a religion to a level of breeding ethnocentrism, which takes us away from the truth of the reality.

We are taught, first to desire the worldly fulfillments as a solution to happiness, and then to go to the institutions of our religion to obtain them. They include our sense of both social and religious belonging, our sense of prominence, and our invincibility. Only other day I heard from our cantors an erroneous translation of Guru Arjan's verses in Sukhmani. These verses by the Guru were actually meant that when we are over-powered by wordly desire to fulfill the desires of our false ego, we should seek the company of the enlightened ones so that our mind may be cleansed and Reality may be invoked.

Instead it was translated to mean that whenever we have any type of worldly desire, we should go to our deity and our desire will be fulfilled. The verses are as below :

ਚਾਰਿ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਮਾਗੈ॥ ਸਾਧ ਜਨਾ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਾਗੈ॥

chaar padaarath jay ko maagai. saadh janaa kee sayvaa laagai

One who wrongfully urges for the four cardinal bounties should commit him/ herself to the service of the Saints to get rid of this desire.

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਆਪੁਨਾ ਦੂਖੁ ਮਿਟਾਵੈ॥ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਦ ਗਾਵੈ॥

jay ko aapunaa dookh mitaava, har har naam ridai sad gaavai.

If you wish to be cured of your ailments, sing the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, within your heart to get rid of this worldly desire.

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਆਪੁਨੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਲੋਚੈ॥ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਇਹ ਹਉਮੈ ਛੋਰੈ॥

jay ko apunee sobhaa lorai. saadh sang ih ha-umai chhroai.

If you long for social recognitions for yourself, then seek the company of the holy so that you can get rid of this egoistic urge.

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਡਰੈ॥ ਸਾਧ ਜਨਾ ਕੀ ਸਰਨੀ ਪਰੈ॥

jay ka janam maran toy darai. saadh janaa kee sarnee parai.

If you wish to get rid of a fear of the cycle of birth and death, then seek the Sanctuary of the Holy.

ਜਿਸੁ ਜਨ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦਰਸ ਪਿਆਸਾ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਸਾ॥

jis jan ka-o parabh daras pi-aasaa, naanak taa kai bal bal jaasaa.

Instead of the entire material wishes those who thirst for the Blessed Vision of God Reality - Nanak is a sacrifice, a sacrifice to them.

No matter how naive or how illusory their promises may be, our clergy make it most convincing nevertheless that one should go to them for fulfillment of our erroneously acquired desires. Who would not be elated with the promises of every worldly desire fulfilled by a touch of some one's hand? Who would not feel good to be at the center of the universe or belong to a world religion most suitable to this age? Who would not feel good to be a member of the nation of the chosen people or the nation of the pure? Don't the people from India forget their numerous faults of political corruption and disgusting violations of human rights simply on account of the deep sensitivity of their souls for belonging to the land of Buddha and Nanak, and the culture of non-violence and religious tolerance? I admit that this and other examples are only stereotyped generalizations, but then much of religious behaviour is ruled by stereotypes that are founded by clergy who always identify construction based on ethnicity or religion.

Religious Fundamentalists

In the process of its promise of saving us from the evil and death by becoming religious, a religion began to make its own heavy claims on the members of our society. Just as genes use the body as a vehicle for their own reproduction, a religion also uses individuals as vehicles for its own survival and propagation. In order to ensure its own propagation, a religion must make people as agents of its survival. This is done by inventing and inducing memes of religious viruses to infect our psyche in a way to bring human forces under blind controls.

We are taught erroneously that a good religious person is someone who is willing to sacrifice even his or her life for the cause of his ethnicity in name of his religion and in the name the land where adherents of his religion grew up. A religious person is someone who intuitively knows that the hills and waters around his places of pilgrimage are more beautiful, the sanctified food more fulfilling, the songs from his books more melodious, and ideas of his ascetics more wise. He knows that the language of his scripture is perfect and "other" languages are barbaric; the mode of his worship most logical and those of others as long outmoded; his rituals most rational but habits of the followers of other religions are ridiculous or repulsive. Through inculcating these beliefs, the blind clergy trapped the adherents in the psyche, and traps of traditions and rituals never die because the religious adherents so defined the specific psuedo-religious traditions irrevocably. Further, they give up their wisdom and senses to protect and propagate them. They are told that they are the one chosen to keep traditions alive; without them their faith would be in a state of constant danger and they would soon lose their well deserved identity, and losing this identity would be not less than a death.

In the promotion of further perpetuation, the religious loyalties are taught to convince others of their superiority and recruit them to swell their institutions. Often they are pushed to act with disregard for life or the freedom to worship the sacred, or even giving any benefit to their own society. It is difficult to see how the continuing saga of mutual animosity between Serbs and Croats of Yugoslavia, between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, between Hindus and Sikhs in India, between Hindus and Muslims everywhere or the various warring factions of the South Africa benefits the involved parties.

Glorification of Ethnicity Over Spirituality

We have entered the civilization of the next century in which we will inherit the world inhabiting much greater religious and political diversity than in the time of Jesus, Mohammad, or Guru Nanak. For example, a wide variety of Christians, Sikhs, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Native tribes and all of the various combinations thereof will inhabit the next world. Each group will emphasize its own needs and its own point of view about the function of religion in a pluralistic society. The world today is already plagued by religious violence all over. With the collapse of Communism and need of people in poverty, the danger in the rise of religious triumphs will become much more serious.

In those conditions, the objective of the faith will have to be to bring in spirituality that does not threaten ethnicity or diversity. Rather the presence of diversity in religion strengthens the religious cooperation and faith in the spiritual values in governing the new society. The spirituality that is foreordained to form the soul of religious cooperation is distinct from religious ethnicity. This spirituality transcends all boundaries of ethnic religions. If prevailing religious thoughts continue to be divisive, it is our failure of translating our expressed faith in the spiritual dimensions of human nature. That dimension is only to seek Truth. Guru Nanak Said in Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਿਖੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, 1188)

ayko Dharam darirhai sach ko-ee

There is only one law of religion; every one must imbibe the Truth.

However, our clergy is confusing this laudable principle of religion with narrow definition of ethnicity. Thus, they continue to promote

ancient traditions of sectarian religions and make prevailing religious practices as partisan. They fail to inculcate any faith in the spiritual dimensions of human nature. The spirituality is getting entrapped in the walls of ethnic religiousity. There is a complete failure in religious leadership to transcend biological and ethnic differences. Instead, we regularly manifest the tunnel vision of ethnicity in all forms. First, we exhibit the adversarial relationship with other world religions. We enthusiastically glorify those who advocate supremacy of our religion over others. We give religious sanctions to redemptive violence against innocents. We bestow glorification on struggles between social classes and religious groups. Selfish motives can be found underlying most of ethnic struggles that we launch. There are numerous expressions of divisiveness in religious organizations that have been progressively consolidated in our social life. As a result, the way in which most of our institutions carry out their day-to-day activity presents a fundamental challenge to the concept of inculcating unity and spirituality into our culture.

The interfaith spirit calls for the destruction of those divisive boundaries. It calls for creation of cultures, rituals, laws and institutions that incorporate diversity in faith and still does not lose right of the one reality behind everything. We should listen to the vision that Guru Ram Das provided centuries ago.

ਮਿਥਿਆ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਉ ਧੜੇ ਬਹਿ ਪਾਵੈ॥

ਪਰਾਇਆ ਛਿਦ੍ਰ ਅਟਕਲੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਵਧਾਵੈ॥

ਜੈਸਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਤੈਸਾ ਖਾਵੈ॥

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਧੜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਸਭ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਜਿਣਿ ਆਵੈ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੪, ਪੰਨਾ 366)

mithi-aa doojaa bhaa-o-Dharhay bahi paavi. paraa-i-aa chhidar atkalai aapanaa ahaNkaar vaDhaavai jaisaa beejai taisaa khavvi. jan naanak kaa har Dharhaa

Dharam sabh sarisat jin aavai.

People form alliances in the false love of duality. They indulge in downgrading others for their faults, while their own self-conceit only increases. As they plant, so shall they harvest. Nanak has joined the Lord's alliance of spirituality, which system shall triumph everywhere.

Similarity, Bhai Gurdas emphasized,

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪੰਥ ਸੁਖ ਚਾਹਤ ਸਕਲ ਪੰਥ॥

The nation of the Guru-oriented people would wish well of all nations.

The New World

In the twenty-first century, we are entering the new age of technology and economic prosperity. The culture of wireless communication and Internet media will put all of us in the backyard of each other and our religious claims will become fully transparent. Obviously, they will push us in the age of freedom and choice of values, choice of religion and choice in styles of daily living. Since our clergy who are often too naive and are not accustomed to foresee such a freedom, they will exhibit anxiety and offer a strong resistance. This will be a challenge, as we shall have to work with them, as confrontation leads nowhere.

AUTHORS OF GURU GRANTH AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The Interfaith Scripture

The Guru Granth Sahib contains 5894 hymns. The interfaith nature of this scripture is evident from the fact that Guru Arjan contributed only one third of the hymns (2216), There are hymns from other Gurus composed over a period of two centuries and also the hymns of nineteen other religious leaders of several centuries plus eleven poet laureates of the Guru's court totalling in all 36 authors,

a record still to be matched in any world scripture. Here, the Hindus, the Muslims, the scholars and the untouchables, meet in the same congregation of holy souls. The selection of language for principal use is the language of the holy men evolved during the medieval period- a language which allowed for diversity, and still enjoyed wide currency in whole of Southeast Asia and Mid-East. Based upon the local dialects, it was leavened with expressions from Sanskrit, Prakrit, Persian, Arabic, Bengali and Marathi etc. Guru Granth's languages meant to demolish the claim of any human language to be the language of gods. The spiritual language of the Granth meant to communicate with every segment of the society at their own turf and in their own mother tongues. Therefore at least ten linguistic systems of Indian sub-continent, South East Asia, China and Middle East were employed. To meet the need of inscribing the multi-linguistic scripture the Guru had to design the gurmukhi font especially for this purpose.

Model of Gurus' Life Style

In their life spans, the Gurus made every effort to demolish the walls that were created between people of different faiths, First of all Guru Nanak founded the tradition of Interfaith dialogue in South East Asia. He did so with his playmates, village administrators, school teachers and leaders of all religions and their denominations. Further, they themselves maintained a fluid personal identity. It will be too long to describe in case of all of them. Thus, let us take example of only the founder of our faith here.

The image of Guru Nanak is described as always transforming and he was shown mixing with people of all identities. In one account during his sacred journeys, he is represented as an ascetic who lives on sand (A gurdwara built to immortalize this style is called "roori sahib" meaning Guru's bed of pebbles). In another identity, he becomes a householder who toils for a living as is evident from his

life in the town of Kartarpur that he founded and where he lived for the last 18 years of his life on this earth. Yet, in another mode he is a spiritual savant discoursing with religious elites of all religions like Sidhas, yogis, and mullahs. One time, he is described as underaking pilgrimage to Mecca in the garb of a Muslim haaji. When Guru reached Saudi Arabia, he ran daily dialogues with clergy there. It is there that he was asked which of the exiting religions is better and more suitable for humanity. His response was typically that of an interfaith activist.

ਪੁਛਨ ਗਲ ਈਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਕਾਜੀ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਈ॥
 ਵਡਾ ਸਾਂਗ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ਲਖ ਨ ਸਕੇ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੋਈ॥
 ਪੁਛਣ ਖੋਲ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਵਡਾ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕਿ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੋਈ॥
 ਬਾਬਾ ਆਖੇ ਹਾਜੀਆ ਸੁਭ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਬਾਝੇ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੋਈ॥
 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਦੋਇ ਦਰਗਹਿ ਅੰਦਰ ਲੈਣ ਨ ਢੋਈ॥
 ਕਚਾ ਰੰਗ ਕੁਸੰਭ ਕਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਧੋਤੈ ਥਿਰ ਨ ਰਹੋਈ॥
 ਕਰਨ ਬਖੀਲੀ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਮ ਰਹੀਮ ਕੁਥਾਇ ਖਲੋਈ॥
 ਰਾਹ ਸ਼ੈਤਾਨੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਗੋਈ॥

(ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਵਾਰ ੧, ਪਉੜੀ ੩੩)

Muslim scholars, the Qazi and the maulvi congregated around Guru Nanak and began to inquire on matter of faith and religious commitment. They said to the Guru that he had created a great mystery with his external attire and the deep knowledge of all religions. Could you open your book and search for the answer whether a Hindu or a Muslim is superior or distinguished? Baba Nanak responded to the pilgrims and their leaders that without good deeds both will repent. One is not accepted in the court of the Lord by only claiming to be a member of a religion whether it is Hinduism or Islam. As the colour of safflower is transient and is easily washed away in

water, likewise the colour of religiosity is only momentary. You are busy only denouncing deity of your opponent's religion. In the process, the whole world is following the ways of Satan.

The Guru is then seen giving discourses at Hindu holy place such as Haridwar wearing external appearance of a Hindu ascetic. There too he dialogues with various sects of Hindu religions.

The Nanak is described as a saint who took delight in wearing clothes in styles of Muslim pirs and Hindu ascetics. He chose companions and disciples whose castes and religions do not match; his first Sikh was Muslim, Rai Bullaar, and the second too was a Muslim, Bhai Mardana. His life long companion was a Hindu Bhai Bala. In his social transactions he paid no heed to spatial or dietary religious taboos. It was not without reason that historians, besides calling him Guru, identify him as shah or king, pir, sadh, bhagat, faquir and darves. The underlying logic of these varied terms of salute was to convey the overtly non-conforming personality of Nanak.

It was also not a coincidence that after years of preaching a revealed spiritual mission, establishing numerous religious centres and attracting large followings, when Guru Nanak left his human body for heavenly abode, his followers were unable to decide on Nanak's religion. This indecision was witnessed in a town where he lived for the past 18 years, held daily congregations, selected and crowned his successors, and constantly spread his message. Is it not amazing that it is here that people should not be able to name his religion and no one thought of this event so unusual? Even his successor, Guru Angad, who was present there would elect not to come to their help in resolving the dilemma. Was it not because the universe of Guru Nanak was free of rigid religious identities?

Real Spirituality Distinctions

Besides his compellingly clear practices, Guru Nanak spoke equally persuasively to distinguish between religions defined by their rituals in contrast to the religions that are source of spirituality. The former he referred in the scripture as karam-dharam in contrast to sach-dharam meaning an eternal religion. Karam-dharam consists of a mixture of the prescribed duties and the moral or cultural codes. The successors and the supporting clergy often formulate them. They latter usually ignore the Divine Reality or ineffable Cosmic Consciousness that prevails in the all humanity. Guru Nanak called it a parenthesis that puts limits around every one.

ਬੰਧਨ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਹਉ ਕੀਆ ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ 416)–

banDhan karam Dharam ha-o-kee-aa

All the deeds I perform according to the religion of the rituals imprison me.

He considered it a prison of ego.

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਰਤੇ ਬਹੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਰਿਓ ਰੇ ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰਨਾ 335)

karam Dharam kartay baho sanjam ahaN-buDh man jaari-o ray.

Those who practice religious rituals and strict self-discipline they acquire egotistical mind which shall consume their consciousness.

The Gurus awakened people to the futility of cultural bondage disguised under the name of a religion and said thus.

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਸਭਿ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਪਾਪ ਪੁੰਨ ਸਨਬੰਧੁ ॥

ਮਮਤਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਸੁ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਕਲਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੁ ਧੰਧੁ ॥

ਜਹ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਹ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾ ਸਨਬੰਧੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਵਰਤਣਿ ਵਰਤੈ ਅੰਧੁ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੩, ਪੰਨਾ 551)

*karam Dharam sabh banDhnaa paap punn san-banDh,
mamtaa moh so banDhnaa putar kaltar so Dhandh. jah
daykhaa tah jayvree maa-i-aa kaa san-banDh. naanak
sachay naam bin vartan vartai anDh.*

*Relgions of rituals are all just entanglements: their
bondage is with bad and good. Those things done for
the sake of children and spouse, in ego and attachment,
are just more bonds. Wherever I look, there I see the noose
the attachment to Maya. O Nanak, without the True Name,
the world is engrossed in blind entanglements.*

Guru Nanak considered karam dharam distracting us from the knowledge of the Creator.

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣੈਹਾਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 380)

*karam Dharam jugat baho kartaa karnaihaar na jaanai.
One performs all sorts of religious rituals and sanctified
actions, but actually one is distracted from the real path
of knowing the Greater Lord, the Doer of all.*

Saint Kabir also described his disbelief in the rigid identity of religions as:

ਵਰਤ ਨ ਰਹਉ ਨ ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨਾ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਸੇਵੀ ਜੋ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ॥੧॥

ਏਕੁ ਗੁਸਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ॥ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨਬੇਰਾ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

ਹਜ ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ ਪੂਜਾ॥ ਏਕੋ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ॥੨॥

ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ॥ ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ॥੩॥

ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ॥ ਅਲਹ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਪਰਾਨ॥੪॥

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਖਾਨਾ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਖੁਦਿ ਖਸਮੁ ਪਛਾਨਾ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 1136)

varat na raha-onamahramdaanaa. tis sayyeejo rakhai
nidaanaa. ||1|| ayak gusaa-ee alhu mayraa. Hindoo turak
duhad" naybayraa. ||1|| rahaa-o. haj kaabai jaa-o-na
tirath poojaa. ayko sayvee avar no dooja. ||2|| pooja kara-
o na nivaaj gujaara-o. ayk nirankaar lay ridai
namaskaara-o. ||3|| naa ham Hindoo na musalmaan. alah
mam kay pind paraan, kaho kabeer ih kee-aa vakhaanaa.
gur peer mil khud khasam pachhaanaa.

*I do not keep fasts, nor do I observe the month of
Ramadaan. I serve only the One, who will protect me
in the end. The One Lord, the Lord of the World, is my
God Allah. He administers justice to both Hindu and
Muslim. I do not make pilgrimages to Mecca, nor do
I worship at Hindu sacred shrines. I serve the One Lord,
and not any other. I do not perform Hindu worship
services, nor do I offer the Muslim prayers. I have taken
the One Formless Lord into my heart; I humbly worship
Him here. I am not a Hindu, nor am I a Muslim. My body
and breath of life belong to Allah-to Raam-to God of both.
Says Kabeer, this is what I say: meeting with the Guru,
my Spiritual Teacher, I realize God, my Lord and Master.*

Bhagat Kabir further explained:

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਛਾਡੇ ਦੇਉ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥

ਬੁਨਿ ਬੁਨਿ ਆਪ ਆਪੁ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਉ॥ ਜਹ ਨਹੀ ਆਪੁ ਤਹਾ ਹੋਇ ਗਾਵਉ॥੨॥

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਜੋ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੀਆ॥ ਛਾਡਿ ਚਲੇ ਹਮ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਲੀਆ॥੩॥

ਰਿਦੈ ਇਖਲਾਸੁ ਨਿਰਖਿ ਲੇ ਮੀਰਾ॥ ਆਪੁ ਖੋਜਿ ਖੋਜਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਕਬੀਰਾ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰਨਾ 1159)

pandit mulandⁿ chhaaday do-oo. ||1|| rahoo-o bun bun aap
aap pahiraava-o. jah nahee aap tahaa ho-ay gaava-o. ||2||
pandit mulcuffjo likh dee-aa. chhaad chalay ham kachhoo

*na lee-aa. ||3|| ridai ikhlaasnirakh laymeeraa. aapkhøj
khøj milay kabeeraa. ||4||7||*

I have abandoned the Pandits, the Hindu religious scholars, and the Mullahs, the Muslim priests. I weave and weave, and wear what I weave. Where egotism does not exist, there I sing God's Praises. Whatever the Pundits and Mullahs have written, I reject; I do not accept any of it. I cleansed my heart to purity so that to enable me to see the Lord within. Searching and searching within the self, Kabeer has met the Lord.

One can give many instances of the Gurus' rebuff to the religiously sanctified rituals and other concepts of karam dharam that were practiced in the their time. For example:

ਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਾਰੇ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 534)

*raaj na chaaha-o mukat na chaaha-o man preet charan
kamlaaray.*

I desire neither worldly riches nor religiously defined salvation but I seek the consciousness for the realization of the love of the God's lotus-like feet.

One rebuff from Kabir is

ਕਬੀਰ ਸੁਰਗ ਨਰਕ ਤੇ ਮੈ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ॥

ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਕੀ ਮਉਜ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਉ ਅੰਤਿ ਅਰੁ ਆਦਿ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਪੰਨਾ 1370)

*kabeer surag narak lay mat rahi-o satgur kay parsaad.
charan kamal kee ma-uj meh raha-o-ant ar aad.*

Kebeer, the Grace of the True Guru has spared me from heaven and hell. From beginning to end, I abide in the joy of the Lord's Lotus Feet.

Echoing Guru's teachings, other leaders of the Bhagati movement of the time joined the Guru and exposed the Karam-Dharam. For example, Bhagat Bainsi says in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

ਤਨਿ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਪਾਤੀ॥ ਰਿਦ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਰ ਤਲ ਕਾਤੀ॥
 ਠਗ ਦਿਸਟਿ ਬਗਾ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗਾ॥ ਦੇਖਿ ਬੈਸਨੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਮੁਖ ਭਾਗਾ॥੧॥
 ਕਲਿ ਭਗਵਤ ਬੰਦ ਚਿਰਾਂਮੰ॥ ਕ੍ਰਰ ਦਿਸਟਿ ਰਤਾ ਨਿਸਿ ਬਾਦੰ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥
 ਨਿਤਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਸਰੀਰੰ॥ ਦੁਇ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਰਮ ਮੁਖਿ ਖੀਰੰ॥
 ਰਿਦੈ ਛੁਰੀ ਸੰਧਿਆਨੀ॥ ਪਰ ਦਰਬੁ ਹਿਰਨ ਕੀ ਬਾਨੀ॥੨॥
 ਸਿਲ ਪੂਜਸਿ ਚਕ੍ਰ ਗਣੇਸੰ॥ ਨਿਸਿ ਜਾਗਸਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸੰ॥
 ਪਗ ਨਾਚੀਸ ਚਿਤੁ ਅਕਰਮੰ॥ ਏ ਲੰਪਟ ਨਾਚ ਅਧਰਮੰ॥੩॥
 ਮ੍ਰਿਗ ਆਸਣੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ॥ ਕਰ ਊਜਲ ਤਿਲਕੁ ਕਪਾਲਾ॥
 ਰਿਦੈ ਕੂਤੁ ਕੰਠਿ ਰੁਦ੍ਰਾਖੰ॥ ਰੇ ਲੰਪਟ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਅਭਾਖੰ॥੪॥
 ਜਿਨਿ ਆਤਮ ਤਤੁ ਨ ਚੀਨਿਆ॥ ਸਭ ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਅਬੀਨਿਆ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਬੈਨੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 1351)

*tan chandan mastak paatee. rid antar kar talk kaatee.
 thag disat bagaa liv laagaa. daykh baisno paraan mukh
 bhaagaa. kal bhagvat band chiraa^N md^N. karoor disat
 rataa nis baud^N, rahha-o-. nitparat isnaan sareerd," du-
 ay Dhotee karam mukh kheera.^N ridai chhuree sanDhi-
 aanee. pardarab hiran kee baanee. silpojas chakar
 ganaysd.^N nis jaagas bhagat paravasya.^N pag naachas
 chit akaram.^N ay lampat naach aDharanf marig aasan
 tulsee maalaa. kar oojal tilak kapaalaa. ridai koorh kanth
 rudraakha.^N ray lampat krisan adhaakha.^N jin aatam tat
 na cheen^N i-aa. sabh fokat Dharam abeeni aa.*

*Your rub your body with sandalwood oil, and place basil
 leaves on forehead. But you hold a knife in the hand of
 your heart. You look like a thug; pretending to meditate,
 you pose like a crane. You try to look like a Vaishnav,
 but the breath of others' life escapes through your*

mouth ||1|| You pray for hours to God the Beautiful. But your gaze is evil and your nights are wasted in conflict. ||1|| Pause II You perform daily cleansing rituals, wear extra length loin-cloths, perform religious rituals and drink cleansing ritualistic milk. But in your heart, you have a drawn sword. You routinely steal the property of others. ||2|| You worship the stone idol, and paint ceremonial marks of Ganesha. You remain awake throughout the night, pretending to worship God. You dance, but your consciousness is filled with evil. O lewd and depraved man, this is such an unrighteous dance. ||3|| You sit on a deer -skin, and chat on your rosary. You put the sacred mark, the tilak, on your forehead. You wear the rosary beads of Shiva around your neck, but your heart is filled with falsehood. O lewd and depraved man, you do not chant God's Name. II4II Whoever does not realize the essence of the soul, all his religious actions are hollow and false. Says Baineer, mediate as God oriented. Without the True Guru, you shall not find the way.

Similarly Kabir rejected the path of the priestly class who advocated any sort of karam dharma.

ਕਬੀਰ ਜਿਹ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਗਏ ਪਾਛੈ ਪਰੀ ਬਹੀਰ॥

ਇਕ ਅਵਘਟ ਘਾਟੀ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਤਿਹ ਚੜਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਕਬੀਰ॥

(ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰਨਾ 1373)

*kabeer jih maarag pandit ga-ay paachhat paree baheer.
ik avghat ghaatee raam kee thi charh rahi-o kabeer.
Crowds of people are following the path that is laid down
by the clergy and religious scholars. However, Kabir
selected a unique path that directly leads to the Divine.*

In the similar tone. Guru Gobind Singh describes his ideal for the creator calling God as AMJBE (AaMajabey). Majab is the Persian word that actually means Religion. Therefore, Amajbe is a state of being religion-less; not irreligious but a-religoius. The Guru inspired us to perfect a state of excellence that is beyond religion. Guru Gobind Singh described preoccupation of the followers of the religions corrupted with rituals as :

ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਪਾਹਨ ਪੂਜ ਧਰਯੋ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਹੂ ਲੈ ਲਿੰਗ ਗਰੇ ਲਟਕਾਇਓ॥
 ਕਾਹੂ ਲਖਿਓ ਹਰਿ ਅਵਾਚੀ ਦਿਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਕਾਹੂ ਪਛਾਹ ਕੋ ਸੀਸੁ ਨਿਵਾਇਓ॥
 ਕੋਊ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਕੋਊ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੋ ਪੂਜਨ ਧਾਇਓ॥
 ਕੂਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਝਿਓ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕੋ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ॥

Many worship stones, others carry idols as religious icons. Many search for God in the East and others search God in the opposit directions. Many worship idols and others the dead ancestors. Every one is thus engaged in false rituals and none has really understood the Lord.

Guru Gobind Singh rightfully pointed to the numerous cultural influences that distract human beings from their divine unity and which mould the human behaviour into a variety of differences.

ਕਹਾ ਭਯੋ ਜੋ ਦੋਊ ਲੋਚਨ ਮੁੰਦ ਕੈ ਬੈਠਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਬਕ ਧਿਆਨ ਲਗਾਇਓ॥
 ਨ੍ਰਾਤ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਲੀਏ ਸਾਤ ਸਮੁਦ੍ਰਨਿ ਲੋਕ ਗਯੋ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਗਵਾਇਓ॥
 ਬਾਸ ਕੀਓ ਬਿਖਿਆਨ ਜੋ ਬੈਠ ਕੈ ਐਸੇ ਹੀ ਐਸ ਸੁ ਬੈਸ ਬਿਤਾਇਓ॥
 ਸਾਚੁ ਕਹੋਂ ਸੁਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭੈ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ॥

For what are sitting here with closed eyes and in a yogic posture. It is like attentiveness of the bird. You are running around the world to take a dip in holy waters. As a matter of fact you are wasting your oppourtunities here and thereafter. You live in the woods, sins and waste your life. I want to reveal a truth to you. Only those will reach the Almighty who love the Lord.

His conclusion :

*The world is consumed in mass of religious ceremonies,
but has failed wholly to comprehend the true spirit of
God.*

Kabir described the Khalsa by saying that

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜਨੁ ਭਏ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਪਰਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਜਿਹ ਜਾਨਹਿ॥
*kaho kabeer jan bha-ay khaalsay parayam bhagat jih
jaanee*
*Says Kabeer, those humble people become pure- they
become Khalsa-who know the Lord's loving devotional
worship.*

In summary, Sri Guru Granth Sahib emphasized again and again that the task of the faith is to separate the genuine insight of religion for a version of true reality from the inevitable errors of ritualism and materialistic culture that crept into the religious practices. To practice or preach a religion in order to practice or promote ethnicity is to advocate a serious contradiction. Further, it is not the source of a belief or even how one acquires it, it is actually the ways in which an adherent formulates a sum total of his/her faith practices and the way in which one actually let the practice of one's belief impact one's daily life, that one will get the most wanted results. These results will be potent in determining the well being of one's material and spiritual world.

CONCLUSION

The new ecological age is developing a global community of an increasingly close-knit "global village"; cultures and religions, which were once isolated from one another. Beliefs, which once were ignored as foreign, will become well understood and will be actively projected for acceptance of others. At the same time new ideas and

insights from science and technology will season the interaction between and among faiths and between faith and daily life of its adherents. Further, unprecedented freedom of choice, which will become available on account of material prosperity, will impact on selection of faith by new generations.

All this will obligate us into an intense interfaith dialogue. The world religions will face what is perhaps the greatest challenge that they have ever encountered. We will learn that each faith is inspired by unique vision of the divine and also has developed a distinct ethnic or cultural identity. Each perceives the divine as the source of unity and peace but each feels compelled to preserve its religious and cultural uniqueness in a way that causes narrow and divisive sectarianism. Most often certain clergy and their newly converted fundamentalists promote this sectarianism. By doing so, they actually contradict the vision of the unity and the peace their religion claims to preach.

To resolve all of this in view of the new world, the spiritual philosophy of "truth" will have to undergo an intense period of dialogues and transition. This transition will be influenced from every spiritual and religious tradition around the world, and from an array of philosophical and scientific disciplines. Waves of this intense turmoil will impact the awareness of every sincere and informed seeker of spirituality.

In this turmoil the seeker will be confronted with an array of questions. Is there a basic problem with any perception of myself in this cosmos that can be remedied by my faith? Is there some common underlying reality, which is incompletely described by each of the religions? Should I prefer one of these traditions, and reject the others as false? Do they all point to truth, each in a different way that is better understood by the culture of its adherents? Is there

a single way most suited to my environment? Can I seek the truth from a religious tradition without adherence to its ethnic or ritual requirements? Can I combine elements from many of these traditions in my own unique way? Do must I simply accept one tradition, and close myself to all others? Could new scientific ideas and insights persuade the traditions of religions as metaphors?

I believe that any institution of organized religion will have to go through a large-scale process of creative ferment to survive in the new age. It will have to take into account the confluence of religions throughout global cultures. Each traditional approach to religious truth will have to accept a challenge of its encounter with another tradition. The entire process will be seasoned by new idea and insights from science. The mode in which the Sri Guru Granth Sahib was compiled four centuries ago tells us that these encounters create a deeper understanding of spiritual thoughts in the mind of a religious seeker. It is hoped that there will be dialogues such as this in every tradition. The authors of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib tell us that a vision of the healing light of spirituality overcomes the social and ideological issues that underline much of the conflict between religions. I believe that the institutions we call Sri Guru Granth Sahib will impact on these processes or questions as it did at the time of its creation 400 years ago.

Gurbani's Concept of Suffering

—Dr. Darshan Singh

The word suffering, according to dictionary, has a wide range of meanings, one of them is unhappiness and this one is prominent one. Unhappiness is synonymous to *Dukh* and opposite to *Sukh*. But when one suffers unhappiness, it enters the realm of suffering. These sufferings and *Dukh* are taken to be mutually synonymous, particularly for the present treatment.

Conceptually, according to Guru Granth Sahib, *Dukh* and *Sukh* both are non-existent. These are two positions of perceptions of the mind only. Both originate from individual mind and therefore both turn out to be individually identifiable. Every individual has one's own perceptions of *dukh* and *sukh* and therefore both are relative in nature. In the Absolute or ultimate analysis, both are only different states of mind and therefore are unrelated to the factual reality. Thus, actually these two have different dimensions: one connected with the Absolute and other one connected with the relative. This perception of one entity with two dimensions is the underlying principle or reality of human mind. It is possible that other forms of living creatures also suffer *Dukh* and enjoy *Sukh* but in the human frame it is more visible. I mean human beings are made sensitive to this kind of feeling of fascination, visibly more than any other creature.

Dukh or suffering is not limited to a particular kind of person, area, or society. It is universal, whether one belongs to A country

or B country, A race or B race. A social group or B social group. The feelings of *Sukh* and *Dukh* are equally perceptive in them. The intensity of the feeling of suffering may differ, but healthiest one. The intensity of the feeling of suffering may differ, but everyone of human beings is sensitive to this kind of experience and it is without any exception, "Talk to any person, he is fully empowered by his own (kind of) *Dukh*." (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 497)

The cause of suffering may differ. Many times it is different but the feelings or the perception of it are almost same everywhere and anywhere.

According to Gurbani all ordinary living beings are subject to *Sukh* and *Dukh*. The next problem, according to it is that *Dukh* and *Sukh* both are self-regulatory, in terms of self and its contact with the other one. When they originate they evolve themselves further. *Dukh* is more akin to this tendency. It is even against the wishes of the sufferer. Both create their own way and proceed on it. One produces the other and the other intensifies the first one. "*Sukh* produces *Dukh*, and same *Dukh* produces *Sukh*" (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1328 M.1). Therefore, for an ordinary human being the suffering is indispensable, one has to suffer because one is deeply involved into worldiness.

No Sukh in earning more money.

No Sukh in seeing dance and drama.

No Sukh in earning from more countries.

(Guru Granth Sahib, p.1147, M.5)

The excellent part of it, according to Gurbani, is that both are productive. *Sukh* has the tendency to turn the table and regulate itself into producing *Dukh*. Desire, lust, vanity, ego are the by-products of *Sukh*. When it reaches the climax, the situation is changed and these very factors turn the *Sukh* into *Dukh*. Here the relationship of

relative and absolute becomes more clearly perceivable. The relative is a characteristics of human kind, with the escalated ego turning up to equal itself with Absolute. The later one who transcends the relative, on the other hand, having detest and dislike for ego, strikes it down. At this stage egoist either perishes or realises its actual place and thus submits before the Absolute. This, in any way, is the state of awakening, realization and entering into the realm of ecstasy. The relative, the subject, begins to enjoy union with object, the Absolute. He reaches the position of Sahaj, the highest state of a human achievement. Thus, if the *Sukh* is cause of *Dukh*, then sometimes even the *Dukh* has the potential to take subject to the highest degree of *Sukh*, eternal bliss. In this way, both like, many other comparables, used in Gurbani, are intimately connected with each other, having an impact on the other one even during its exercise “which vanishes in little time must be treated as insignificant *sukh*.” (Ibid., p. 677, M.5)

Obviously Gurbani has a technique of using opposite to make its impact strong and effective. To me, it appears that the use of music and poetry are different kinds of vehicles to achieve this objective. Gurbani has a special love for them. But the primary concern of the Sikh Gurus is, that whatever they want to communicate with the masses, it should transparently reach them. All the devices are subject to this achievement, the objective. Using opposites as comparable in art and literature is very effective device since their inception. It is more important when the emphasis is on imparting a message. Gurbani has a message and Guru's primary concern is that this message must reach the masses. Gurmukh and Manmukh, Sachiar and Kudiar, *Dukh* and *Sukh* and many more such comparables are devised and used for this purpose.

Fortunately, unlike most of the earlier Indian scriptures, Gurbani is not a close ending scripture. It is ever open ending. Thus even

the most condemned aspect of human behaviour i.e. ego and the most uncherished part of the human desire that is *Dukh* have the potential to contribute positively. Being always positive and Gurbani's interact in the virtue to prevail to be creative in terms of individual and social good, it tried to have a positive attitude. As stated above Gurbani knows that almost all human beings, may be other forms of creatures also, are in some or the other way, empowered by *Dukh*. This *Dukh* is also of many types. Some people are unhappy because they suffer health, some are unhappy because they suffer loss and some are unhappy because they suffer the loss of their dear ones. These and many more are the reasons which make an individual unhappy and thereby he or she suffers the agony. The betrayal of a dear one is also the reason to make an individual unhappy. Sometimes a sensitive soul suffers because he or she finds the other person insensitive to her/his sensitivity. This is the most acute form of suffering, of course, it is abstract also. Such kind of suffering leads to frustration, alienation and sometimes to a mental disorder. Naturally the suffering here becomes disaster. It is most horrible aspect of human life. It is in this context that, Gurbani believes that everyone has one's own reasons to suffer. Everyone is empowered by his own sensitivity and this sensitivity sometimes leads to a kind of suffering which is exclusive to oneself.

According to Gurbani the suffering has a reason also. As stated above it is not something that comes from outside and enters into one's mind. It is the product of one's own mind. Lust, anger and ego are the most destructive part of the human behaviour. Anyone of these or all the three combined produce a situation in which a human being suffers. About the by-product of these, Gurbani says, "The political power, the wealth, the beauty, (pride of) caste and youth fulness all the five are cheat. These cheats have looted the world. (Ibid., 1287, M.1)

The reasons behind this self-originating diseases are very common. The educated people try to live by the strength of their education particularly modern education and the rich ones try to live by the strength of their wealth. This vanity, originating from both above mentioned sources, is an ever increasing disease. It does not allow to live anyone in peace. We know lust cannot quench lust. Therefore, instead of satisfaction, this disease increased. All attempts to satisfy it through these facilities fail. The western society, through this strength has come to the conclusion that secular model of Governance and of the society by and large, is the most reliable model so far available in human history. This perception and continuous struggle to perfect it has given the western society enough facilities for enjoying abundant *sukh* in the mundane world. From this angle, it is a story of the unquestionable success of the western society but strangely enough, even there the society is not free from suffering. More the facilities, more the indulgence, resulting into more the suffering. It is an unending vicious circle. In such a situation, the whole exercise becomes an irony. It has been proved that it is impossible that such an unending circle can bring peace to the mind and thus happiness to an individual or on the whole to the society. By using the comparable opposite, Guru Nanak has given a beautiful portrait of such a situation:

- *The application of aloe and sandal on body*
- *The wearing of silk clothes*
Are meaningless because
There is no Sukh without the name of God.
- *The wearing and dressing fondly*
Are meaningless, because
There is no Sukh without the name of God.
- *The wearing of ear-rings and neck-lace of pearls*

*Having spread red bed-sheet, red flowers and red colour
(on bed)*

Are meaningless because

There is no Sukh without the name of God.

- *Having a beautiful women with fascinating eyes.
Who dresses herself with sixteen arts of make up, and
becomes the loveliest one.
It is meaningless, because
Without the name of God, one suffers.*
- *The palacious house, the comfortable luxury beds
By gardner decorated with flowers
Are meaningless, because
The body (and mind) suffers without the name of God.*
- *The houses, the elephants, the drums and bands
The Armies, the offices, the servants, the pomp and show
Are all meaningless, because
All these possessions are useless, without the name of God.*

(Ibid., p.225, M.1)

This paradigm of life deserves urgent and immediate attention, specially by those who claim to know unlimited knowledge, even about the deep mysteries of nature, and also who possess wealth in abundance, unfortunately keeping their ignorance and arrogance ever alive. This presents a very paradoxical situation: the richness of knowledge and wealth should have provided the corresponding amount of relief and Sukh, but as we see, the situation is otherwise even in the most developed societies. In order to give relief to the suffering humanity Gurbani has formulated certain very strong arguments. It speaks about the impermanence of these two seemingly living elements of *Dukh* and *Sukh*. According to it both are not only transitory but replaceable also. The human mind avails of this nature

of the both. Time is much more powerful, and with time both *Dukh* and *Sukh* also pass out. These two have no ground in the ever moving world, therefore they cannot be perpetual. The human mind has to understand this fact that if everything else is changing, then these two perceptions will also change. One has to live with patience and work to overcome it by the means suggested by Gurbani. Secondly, Gurbani teaches us that *Dukh* can be empowered. An individual must have sense or an art of rationalization. They should be able to rationalize that such experience do not fall upon from outside. In fact it is the product of individual's own mind hence actions. Gurbani is very clear, "Bear O: mind, the product of your own actions." (Asa di Var, M.1)

There are many methods which different scriptures have provided us. In this context Gurbani also has a solution part. It has a solution for remedying the feelings. By developing oneself up to the extent that he or she automatically, instinctively rises above this perception. The human beings are insufficient beings and therefore generally empowered by the perception of the reality. In modern times, scientific temper and behaviour and technological miracles have raised the status of a human being to almost a super human. Still, they are insufficient in terms of their realization of the Absolute. Therefore, to surmount this inherent deficiency, Gurbani commits itself to develop such a society which, contrary to it, is holistic in nature. According to its all rightly directed and awakened human beings have the potential to awake and rise above. Gurbani believes that the chains of greed, anger and ego must be broken. Thereby one must direct oneself to identify with the absolute. Every other achievement is meaningless as compared to this single achievement. Those who live by truth and for the well being of every other one, will live by this enviable status.

Gurbani is of the opinion that even one solution is sufficient for remedying the causes which result in suffering. Remember the name of God. According to Gurbani this is the one method of liberation. All other methods, actions, forms of worships are non-productive. Gurbani detests the pretentious behaviour. It believes that all other methods have a scope for pretention. Only soul when touches the higher soul, without any exhibition, is the proper method of changing attachment from the temporal to the non-temporal. The end product of this method will definitely be a higher living being, named *sachiar*. This is the name of the God. This is the highest truth and living by it means living by higher values of life. This is the real and only effective remedy. When this is achieved, the perceptions of *Dukh* and *Sukh* both will vanish.

To sum up the whole discussion, it means:

1. The suffering is a part of human existence.
2. It is inherently placed in him/her.
3. It is the product of one's own action.
4. It is neither real nor permanent.
5. Spirit of rationalisation in the fair step towards its elimination.
6. Complete surrender before Guru/God.
7. Uninterrupted remembering the name of God.
8. Suffering will become non-existent.
9. An individual will emerge as a victor by empowering the perception of suffering.
10. The process of self expansion, identifying with all objects of creation and thereby enjoying complete freedom from suffering will be the natural consequence.

Dialogical Human Reality and Sri Guru Granth Sahib

—Dr. Jodh Singh

Dialogical nature of man is the common theme of twentieth century philosophy in general. Sartre, Marcel and other existentialists as well as philosophers like Levinas, Derrida and Foucault have emphasized the dialogical character of human situation in particular. Infact dialogue is an inter-personal and inter-subjective method of communication of one-self with the other. The existentialists do not accept the other as a transcendent reality whereas the other is considered as Maya by Advait Vedanta and as a grand illusion by almost all the mystic poets and philosophers in India. Emmanuel Levinas a French philosopher has delved deep into the problem of dialogue with the other and he grapples straight with this methodology of human interaction in his essay "Beyond Dialogue".

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), a Jew by faith and citizen of France, prolifically wrote on Judaism and the Jewish life. His writings dissect the question of the 'other' the other of philosophy. He delves deep into the disruption of the logic of identity by the irruption of the heterogeneous other. Working at the very limits of philosophy, Levinas has pondered over the "end of Metaphysics" and above all has solicited the break up of philosophical "totality" by the "other". The connections between the historical horrors of the Nazi period and the philosophical idea of neutral, impersonal "being"

is direct. For, as Levinas writes, the ontology as the attempt to reduce the other to the same or "beings" of "Being" is ultimately an egoism, "philosophy is an egology" (**Totality and Infinity**) and "Heideggarian ontology, which subordinates the relationship with the other to the relation with Being in general, remains under obedience the anonymous, and leads inevitably to another power, to imperialist domination, to tyranny." (T.9.47)

The distinctive mark of Levinas's philosophy is the passionate search for a way out of this tyranny, "this multiplicity of allergic egoisms." In his interpretation of etymology, Being of essence—the Latin *esse*—is rooted in **interesse** or interest, egoism, usurption, "War is the deed or drama of the essences interest... Essence is the extreme synchronism of war." Even when these conflicting interests and egoisms are transformed into unstable "peace of commerce, exchange, calculations or politics, they assemble themselves into a totality without 'fissures' —that is with no room for the gratuitous, for real peace." Justice and peace —peace as that very moment of renunciation, welcome and vulnerable exposure to the other, are such themes of Levinas's philosophy which have been profusely articulated in Indian philosophy also. Sikhism holds that fight for righteousness and justice should be fought even if it is not in the case of one's own particular religion or social group. Guru Tegh Bahadur set an healthy model in the medieval period fanatic scenario of India where he laid down his head for the safety of brahmanic society and faith whose he neither was a member nor he ever accepted their tenets. It was the urge for ethical values, justice and religious freedom which inspired him to sacrifice his head under the tyrannical ruler's sword. Levinas also asserts that philosophy and judgement of history, modes of intelligibility come through ethics, ethics as relation between separated beings in discourse and not in ecstatic fusion, a relation which is that of justification, appeal, command and obligation.

The aspect of goodness of human reality also cannot be overlooked. That is also all pervasive in man to man relationship. Vasily Grossman in his book **Life and Fate** takes a detailed notice of this human reality while he portrays the times of Hitler and Stalin. The life in Europe in those times seems to have been regulated on the basis of total contempt for the reality called human being. This book represents that society as being completely dehumanized. However, in the decay of human relations in that sociological misery, goodness persists, in the relations of one person to another. This goodness becomes a mute inner dialogue full of piety with the other. The whole passage is a long monologue in which Mostovkoi is in prison and undertakes to read the writings of Ikonnikov who infact expresses the author's (Vasily Grossman's) idea. He reads, "most of those beings who inhabit the earth do not take as a goal of the definition of the good. In what does the good consist? The good is not in nature, and it is not in the preachings of the prophets either, or in the great social doctrines, or in the ethics of the philosophers. But the simple people bear in their hearts, the love of all living thing; they love life naturally; they protect life." And a bit further he adds: "Thus there exists side by side with this so terrible greater good, human kindness in every day life. It is the kindness of an old lady who gives a piece of bread to a convict along the roadside. It is the kindness of soldier who holds his canteen out to a wounded enemy. The Kindness of youth taking pity on old age, the kindness of peasant who hides an old jew in his barn." And so on.

Now this goodness is the pushing vibrant force of any living humanitarian philosophy because it is a goodness outside all systems, all religions, and all social organizations. Truth, contentment and ever thoughtfulness or trying to be original in thoughts are such spontaneous values reverbrating the pages of holy Guru Granth Sahib,

which have created a glorious chapter in the history of mankind. Sikh history and sociology flow out of these dictums and the episodes of *sacha sauda* by Guru Nanak, serving of water and ointment to even the enemy soldiers by Bhai Kanahaiya, raising of voice by Nawab Sher Khan of Malerkotla against injustice by his own satrap of Sirhind and spontaneous help rendered by Singh Sardars assembled at Amritsar to a brahmin approaching the Akal Takht and many more are such incidents in Sikh History which have the strong background of the philosophy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Dialogue, however is a part of human existence and constant mode of interaction with the other human beings who are ready to share goodness with each other spontaneously. The base of worthy life in Indian philosophy is the doctrine, that one should have partnership with the virtues of the fellow-beings and should keep away from the mischiefs of the other—*sanjh karijai gunah kerī chhodi avagan chahai* (Guru Granth Sahib, p.733). Since humanism can flourish only in autocracy, apostasy and narrowness of heart and mind, Sikhism approves humanitarianism only. The dialogue with the other with the motive of conquering one and all does not fit in the thought frame of Gurbani wherein one finds Guru Nanak (1469-1539) fully conscious of the egological personality likely to emerge from debating behaviour pattern of the society. The researcher with godness in heart flourishes whereas the debater perishes —*khoji upaje badi binasii hau bali bali gur kartara* (Guru Granth Sahib, p.1253) Ego is known as the chronic ailment (*diragh roga*) in Gurbani.

Levinas holds that the idea of proselytism, propaganda and finding of some most-common-denominator platform setting apart, and considering that in certain conflicts persuasion itself because a sort of violence and repression, one should go in searching for a proximity beyond the ideas exchanged, a proximity that lasts even

after the dialogue has become impossible. To create the conducive atmosphere for positive dialogue, the parties concerned should allow the unconditional friendship to take shape and persists which is further ready to act and to reach by example. Hands are required to be extended with confidence, sincerity and warmth. Levinas asserts in 'Beyond Dialogue' that no party should be pressed hard to enjoy the role of victim nor one should be allowed to seduced by compassion. None should be made to realise that he receive friendship as commiseration or as a pardon, granted after long quarrel to a survivor who has done many wrongs but also suffered much hardship. Discussing the reciprocity of the I-you relationship Levinas quotes Buber that when I say 'you', I know that I am saying 'you' to someone who is an 'I', who says 'you' to me. Consequently in that I-you relation, we are immediately in society, but in a society in which we are equal in relation to one another. I am to 'other' what 'other' is to me.

The above mentioned dictum of Levinas's - "I am to other what other is to me" could be a golden rule for a successful dialogue. Discussing the methodology of saving the self from polemical disputational egotist mentality, Sikhism based on the Gurbani talks of a meaningful factual and self analysing dialogue. Indeed Guru Granth Sahib clearly denotes two types of dialogue. The first form of the dialogue is the dialogue with the self, the self appraisal or peeping into the self. Before, the external dialogue the Gurbani inspires first to look into one's own heart and mind. Before interacting with the 'other', getting face to face one's own self, one is bound to know his or her own meanness, shallowness, the layers of self-interests, greeds and diplomacies. So long, one is not ready to cleans out the dirt of above-named propensities with the broom of knowledge emanated from considered thought, one cannot become pure and impolluted and one's external dialogue cannot be meaningful.

The stage of self-analysis brings the stage of auto-suggestions. The basic truths of the goodness of life are so simple, straight and less in number that every individual without involving in theoretical abstractions-polemics, can distinguish them in his own self. Levinas also opines, "one must refuse to be caught up in the tangle of abstractions whose principles are often evident, but whose dialectic, be it so rigorous, is murderous and criminal. "However, he recommends the proximity of the honest attentive and the vigilant persons for tackling a tension but he feels that without any definite project before them and mutual dialogue, the proximity of such persons even may resemble sleep which is not going to solve any problem. Rather these persons will fade away into words, will get lost in technical questions, freeze-up into institutions or structures only. A new solidarity and religiosity through meaningful inter faith dialogue is required to be evolved by recognizing and identifying those insoluble substances which have the potential of exploding in violence, guile or politics. The person capable of initiating dialogue with his own self can control the horse-race of the mercurial nature of the mind with full confidence. Such a dialogical personality becomes broadminded and wherever he goes or joins a discourse he initiates the welfare of others and joyfully tries to understand the crux of the problems raised —*Jithai jai bahiai bhala kahiai jholi amritu pijai. Guna ka hovai vasula kadhi vasu laiji* (Ibid., 766) Throughout the corpus of Guru Granth Sahib we find the Gurus and the Bhaktas of medieval period face to face with the different leaders of the different denominations of society. Guru Nanak held dialogue with the yogis, particularly at four places in erstwhile India-Gorakh Hatari (now in Pakistan), Achal Batala (Punjab), Nanak Mata earlier known as Gorakhmata (U.P.) and Sumer mountain (upper reaches of Himalayan ranges). His dialogue on Sumer mountain with yogis is

known as *Sidh Gosti*, recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib (pp.938-946). *Sidh Gosti* may be put forth as the best model for constructive interfaith dialogue wherein without hurting anybody both the parties are capacitated for explaining their viewpoints about the mundane as well as philosophical problems of life. In this work whether the questions are related to the individual one, whether they are philosophical or ethical, the level of the dialogue is full of serenity, sobriety, mutual respect and basic goodness of mankind to which Levinas also points out in his works produced in second half of the twentieth century.

Levinas sounds prophetic when one finds him asserting in his work **Alterity and Transcendence** that the "piety of the ordinary human cannot be expressed on the basis of any category. For the survival of the humanity we will have to enter the era in which the good must be loved without promises. This should be the end of all preachings." A new faith of human goodness will have to be emerged where faith will be without triumph, where saintliness will be the only irrefutable value and the only right to a reward would be not to expect one.

While referring to the philosophy of dialogue as the first philosophy, Levinas holds that "to address some one expresses the ethial disturbance produced in me, in the tranquility of the perseverance of my being, in my egotism as a necessary state..." May be Levinas is not Wrong and it is very true of the Western philosophy where in the name of dispassionate study every thing is objectified. But that is not the case in Indian philosophy. Here, every object is considered perennially infused with spirit and hence the mystical songs of the rishis, the saints and the gurus. Here every object of the empirical world is trying to transcend itself in order to have the realization as well as mergence in the divine spirit. All philosophies

here tend to create a sense of awe, wonder or in Sikh parlance *Vismad*. In fact the person reached this state gets first his ego melted thereby ceasing all delusions and disturbances of mind. He creates a dialogue with the supreme and all-diffusive spirit all around and instead of disturbing his tranquility, he becomes more stable, tranquil and steadfast. His dialogue becomes a natural flow of love for one and all.

Musicological* Study of the Adi Guru Granth

—Dr. Kirpal Singh

It has been recorded in the Janamsakhi (Bhai Mani Singh) of Guru Nanak that Guru Nanak was sitting under a tree on the outskirts of Baghdad. He started singing Shabad to the tune of Mardana's rabab. This attracted the curious crowd which resented the intrusion since praying in musical tunes is forbidden according to tenets of Islam. Pir Dargir, the priest of Baghdad came there, addressed the Guru —'Music tends to divert the mind towards enjoyment of senses. It is, therefore, not proper to use it for holy communion'. Guru replied 'Musical sound originated from God. It is holy in every sense. The best way to worship God is to blend the divine word with holy music. The music for worship is higher than the type of singing indulged in by some for entertainment'.¹ Guru Ram Dass, the fourth Sikh Guru has elaborated :

*Of all the rags² Brother, that one is the best
Through which mind gets attuned to God
True is the rag and melody of God, its value is
beyond description³*

(Guru Granth Sahib, 1423)

It is believed that air and water were created first on earth. For some time winds blew all over the globe creating two distinct

* Connotation of 'Musicology' according to New Word Webster's Dictionary is
"The systematised study of the science, history and methods of music."

notes high and low. In this music of Heaven creation was made. Therefore, music is in all the creatures. There is music in the soul of every human being. Therefore, the Sikh Gurus adopted music as a media for giving their sermons :

There are thirtyone ragas in the Adi Guru Granth. They are in the following order :

1. Sri Rag; 2. Majh Rag; 3. Gauri Rag; 4. Asa Rag; 5. Gujari Rag; 6. Deo Gandhari Rag; 7. Bihagra Rag; 8. Wadhans Rag; 9. Rag Sorath; 10. Rag Dhanasari; 11. Jaitsari Rag; 12. Rag Todi; 13. Rag Bhairvi; 14. Rag Tilang; 15. Rag Suhi; 16. Rag Bilawal; 17. Rag Gaund; 18. Rag Ramkali; 19. Nat Narain; 20. Mau Gaura; 21. Rag Maru; 22. Rag Tukhari; 23. Rag Kedara; 24. Rag Bhairo; 25. Rag Basant; 26. Rag Sarang; 27. Rag Malar; 28. Rag Kanra; 29. Rag Kalyan; 30. Rag Prabhati; 31. Rag Jai Jaiwanti.

According to an old tradition, recorded in the Sanskrit texts, the following six ragas were produced by Mahadeva and his wife Parbhati—first five were created by Mahadeva and sixth by Parvati.⁴ The six principal Hindu ragas were :

1. Sri Rag; 2. Vasant Rag; 3. Bhairvi Rag; 4. Panchama Rag; 5. Megh Rag; and 6. Nat Narayan Rags.

According to the version noted above Rag Gauri is the variation of Sri Rag, and Todi the variation of Basant Kalyan is variation of Nat Narain.⁵ But the Sikh Gurus have treated all thirtyone ragas as separate entities. Nor the Sikh Gurus have classified them as Ragas and Raginis.

For singing of the hymns of the Rig Veda, a separate Veda namely Sam Veda was composed. But in the case of Guru Granth Sahib, no separate volume for singing of holy hymns was needed. In most of the hymns in the Adi Granth except Japji, Bhattan De

Swayyas etc. indication of Raga, the author of hymn and its method of singing in the form of *Gharu* are given. *Gharu* according to Bhai Kahn Singh, means *Taal* and computation of *Swar* or *Murchhana* in relation to Sargam Pras of Raga.⁶ In Iran, *Gharu* is called 'Gah'.

Another significant features of the Adi Guru Granth is combining music with the sacred verses. It has been stated by Nathan, a renowned author of European music that 'unaided by good poetry spell of music is partly broken.... Pure composition unites music and poetry in dissoluble bond. And so intimate is their connection so equal their value, so indispensable the strictness of their union that rules of sense and propriety render them to echo of each other'.⁷ Keeping in view effectiveness of poetry and music, Sikh Gurus combined music with poetry.

During fourteenth century Amir Khusro introduced Sitar and Tabla in Indian music and invented composition such as *Qual* (now *Qawali*) and *Tarana* by combining Persian and Indian melodies.⁸ He wrote a number of treatises which are of special interest to musicologists. While this Indo-Muslim cultural contact was being made in the north of India, there developed a schism between North Indian music and South Indian music. Completely different types of music —the north Indian Hindustani style, South Indian or Karnataka style became rigidly fixed during sixteenth century.⁹ It was reserved for Guru Nanak during sixteenth century to bring South Indian Ragas to North and combined them. In Adi Guru Granth we find *Ramkali Dakhani*, *Gauri Dakhani*, *Vadhans Dakhani* etc. etc.

Guru Arjan ushered a new era in the history of religious integration of mankind when he declared that true religion consists of two things only -Love of God and Purity of conduct :

sagal dharam mem shrest dharam
harke naam jap nirmal karm

There are about half a dozen Muslim saints, low caste cobbler, weaver and washermen saints whose contributions have been included in the *Adi Granth*. Toynbee has rightly stated 'To have discovered and embraced the deep harmony underlying the historic Hindu-Muslim discord has been noble spiritual triumph.'¹⁰ Similarly, Hindu and Muslim *ragas* have been integrated in the Sikh scriptures. Amir Khusro, the celebrated Persian poet and musician took active interest in development of Indian music. By judicious combination of Persian Makamat and Indian raga, he introduced many derivative melodies. "He introduced new ragas in India viz. Yaman, Firdos, Farzana, Sarpada, Zilaph and many others".¹¹

Guru Arjan has included Yaman Raga in the *Adi Guru Granth* with the Indian name Kalyan Raga. The Sanskrit name of the Rag is Kalyan and Persian name is Yaman.¹² It is 29th raga in the Holy Granth. Among the Chaukis of Kirtan at Hari Mandir Sahib, Amritsar. Kalyan Chowki comes the last as prescribed by Guru Arjan.¹³

The *Adi Granth* as Symphony of Ragas

There are various strands of the spectrum of the ragas¹⁴ in the *Adi Granth*. It is not the music of single people. It is a symphony of singing birds and tunes of different countries and melodies of various regions. Besides this a large number of folk tunes and metres from different regions and localities have been used. All these contribute to make a distinct element in the evolution of various branches of music.

Contribution of Ragas named after birds

In the evolution of music, singing birds had played a significant part. In the primitive state of society nothing interested a man more than cries of animals and songs of the birds. It has been rightly stated 'the sounds of animated nature especially the song of birds delighted

the savage and greatly contributed towards the formation of various tunes. It is for this reason that several ragas in the *Adi Granth* which are named after the birds.

1. Rag Bihagra (pp. 537-556)

Rag Bihag or Bihagra derives its name from a bird named Bihag.¹⁵ This raga is sung in the calm and quiet environment of midnight. It is very sweet and impressive measure which makes us aware of separation and loneliness at midnight and produces in us an inclination to seek unity with the Lord. It is a complete rage of Bilawal Thaata.¹⁶

2. Rag Sarang (pp. 1197-1253)

Sarang is a kind of Indian Cuckoo which is believed to drink only rain drops. It is said that it is cool by nature which provides coolth and solace to human mind and puts an end to its wanderings. It is generally sung during the third pahar of the day i.e. in the afternoon. In the *Harimandir Sahib* at Amritsar, Sarang di Chauki of Kirtan follows Bilawal di Chauki. This is also said that the humans sung in this measure cause cessation to all thirst and hunger of mind and leads it to equipoise.

3. Rag Wadhans (pp. 557-594)

Wadhans is a bird of Swan family. It is known to have discriminating power which can separate milk from water. Wadhans is the eighth in the series of ragas used in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It can be sung at noon or at midnight 'Ghoris' which reflect the singer's joy and 'Alahnian' which reflect sorrow are prescribed to be sung in this measure. Fiftythree shabads and many slokas are there in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* representing this raga.¹⁷

Ragas named after tribes

In the earliest phase of the history of mankind, there used to be settlement in tribes. The people of same tribe used to live together

in order to meet the challenges of wild animals as well as their rivals in the tribal warfare. Some of the tribes used to sing in a particular way. Through centuries their tunes were harmonised and developed into various ragas symbolising the name of their tribes. There are following two such ragas in the Adi Granth represent the tribal origin:

1. Raga Gujari (pp. 489-526)

This raga has been developed from the tribe of Gurjaras¹⁸ popularly known as Gujar. This tribe has given to India the state called Gujarat. Gujarat is district headquarter in West Punjab (Pakistan). It is fifth raga in Sri Guru Granth. It is more popular in the northern and central India. It is sung around noon.

2. Raga Bhairvi (pp. 1125-1167)

Another raga based on tribal origin was Bhairvi or Bhairow which was named after Bhario tribe.”¹⁹ Bhairavis counted among the six measures and it has 14 octaves. It is generally sung in the morning. It creates a pleasant and charming atmosphere and provides ecstasy to human heart. 99 hymns are sung by four Gurus in this raga. Kabir's, Namdev's and Ravidas's hymns are also included in this raga.

Ragas belonging to other countries and regions

Raga Tukhari (pp. 1107-1117)

Guru Granth is the only source from where we learn that India had cordial relations with Tukhar country which according to Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India by Nandu Lal Day was the country north of Afghanistan. This measure is sung in the afternoon or in the morning hours in winters. Guru Nanak, Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan used this raga.

Rag Kalyan (pp. 1319-1326)

This was introduced by Amir Khusro, the celebrated Persian poet and musician. He introduced many Ragas, the most popular of

which was Yaman which is a Persian name.²⁰ Its Sanskrit name is Kalyan. Kalyan measure produces joy in the heart and is generally sung during the hours following dusk. Only Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan Dev have composed hymns in this measure. There are several variations of this raga. From the time when Guru Arjan Dev gave names to the different Chaukis of Kirtan at the Harimandir Sahib, the last chauki of Kirtan has been known as Kalian Di Chauki.²¹

Rag Majh (pp. 194-150)

This raga is said to have been born from the folk tunes of music popular in the Majha (a region of Punjab). It is thus a pure Punjabi raga invented and attributed to Guru Nanak. When the hymns composed by the Gurus in chaste Punjabi measure, the ecstasy thus produced in the hearts of the listeners is beyond words. Guru Arjan Dev, in one of his hymns Bara Maha has depicted the mental state of man during all the twelve months of the years.²²

Rag Sorath (pp. 595-659)

This raga derives its origin from Suarashtra region which is now a part of Gujarat state. It is sung in quiet midnight and creates cheerfulness. Its pleasing sound resembles Raga Desh.²³

Raga Todi (pp. 711-718)

According to B Chaitanya Deva, its original name is Turushoka Todi which is a foreign name.²⁴ Todi has been very popular measure, widely accepted in the royal courts. It is considered one of the most important of the north Indian ragas. The bards used to sing in this measure, the eulogies of their patrons, kings and thereby received elicited material, gifts and gains from them. In the Guru Granth Sahib, it has been used in 32 shabads to praise the supreme Lord.²⁵

SEASONAL RAGAS

Raga Basant (pp.1168-1196)

Some ragas have been divided into six forms and intended to be sung in different seasons of the year. Bhairvi is sung in summer. Megh or Malhar in rainy season. Pancham in autumn, Narnarayan in early winter, Sri in winter and Basant in spring. In the Adi Guru Granth, it has been recorded 'with spring vegetation in bloom'.

Banaspat Mauli Charhia Basant

In Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar on the day of Basant Panchmi the ragis started the singing of Basant. Every group of musicians (Ragi Jatha) start the music by singing Basant Raga. This practice continues until first day of Baisakh when Basant Rag is given farewell. Spring (Basant) season is the best of all seasons because during this period one can perceive novelty, colourfulness and joy in every part of the earth. Joyfulness in nature provides pleasure even to dejected souls. Basant measures also imbibe this kind of bliss in human heart. This measure can be sung at any hour during the spring seasons but preferably it is sung either at night or three hours after sunrise. It has relevance and proximity with Indian culture since olden times.

Rag Malhar (pp.1254-1293)

This is a seasonal raga used during rainy season. It has been stated in the Adi Granth:

malhar sital raghai hardhiaye shant hoi
(soothing in the measure malhar, meditation on God by
this bring serenity)

(Guru Granth Sahib, p.283)

It is common saying that if the month of Sawana (July, August) is taken out of the calendar, nothing remains behind. It makes clear that the said month is immensely valuable to human life from all

aspects. And when Malhar measure is sung during the days of monsoons, it adds further to its splendour. Malhar measures reflect the aspirations of human mind. It provides new desires, new aspirations and joys. Guru Amar Das states in quite unequivocal terms that this measure is of cool temper. It can be sung at any time during the rainy season but otherwise it is sung in the afternoon (third pahar i.e. portion of the day).²⁶

Sri Raga (pp. 14-93)

In the Hindu system of Ragas, Sri Raga is the first rag. It has been recorded that 'singing was invented by the Mahadeva and Parvati'. Sri Raga is the first musical measure used in the Guru Granth Sahib and it covers pages 14 to 93 comprising 142 shabads. It is a very old but complex raga of the traditional Indian measures. Only competent and proficient musicians can sing this raga. It is generally sung in the evening. It is considered one of the most famous from among the North Indian Classical systems.²⁸ Four Gurus (1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th) and two Bhagtas (Kabir and Beni) used this raga.

Rag Gauri (pp. 12-13 and 151-346)

There are two views about the origin of the name of this raga—one is it would have originated in Bengal, and secondly Gauri was the wife of Siva, the supposed originator of Sri Rag. It appears that both these ragas are after the name God and Goddess. Hence Gauri raga occupies a very significant place in the evolution of Indian music. Maximum number of hymns have been composed in this measure reason for this is perhaps the serious nature of the raga. Thus, all serious and sober themes have been dealt with under this measure. The Bani included in the Guru Granth Sahib takes human mind out of evil and endeavours to restore pristine glory to individual self. The accomplishment of this aim is rather difficult. Endeavour has to be made seriously and sincerely. Hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib

have been set to twelve different forms of Gauri measures, such as Gauri Purabi, Gauri Dipaki, Gauri Majh, Gauri Sukhmani etc. It is an evening raga assigned to autumn and its mood is contemplative.²⁹

Raga Asa (pp. 8-12 and 247-488)

It is very interesting to note that Raga Asa is not found in the old books of music like Rag Darpan or Rag Deepika. Nor modern writers Prof. S. Bandopadhyaya has mentioned it in his modern book 'Origin of Ragas'. Some people surmise that this raga owes its origin to Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism. Any way it is one of the most important ragas of Guru Granth Sahib. The Asa Di Var is recited daily in all the Gurdwaras including Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar. This is a measure which fulfils desires and which is sung early in the morning in cold season when the entire nature enjoys the ecstasy of ambrosial hours. It is also sung around dusk to satiate one's soul. It is known as a twilight melody too with a calm mystical mood. Its pleasing and charming sound attracts everyone. Among the contributors who have composed their hymns in this musical measure include Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Besides hymns of Bhagat Kabir, Bhagat Namdev, Bhagat Ravidas, Bhagat Dhanna and Baba Sheikh Farid have also been included in this raga.

Folk Music

The Sikh Gurus had most intimate connection with the masses. Therefore, they never lost sight of folk music. Like the Greek people there had been custom in Punjab to eulogise the bravery of heroes in the form of ode which was called Var. They had their particular tunes for singing these vars. In the Adi Guru Granth, there are twentytwo vars. Their main subject is praise of God. About nine vars of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru,³⁰ indicated the then popular tunes in which they were to be sung. The indications of tunes have been given

in the beginning of the var. Just in the case of Asa Di Var, it has been recommended that it should be sung in tune of Raja Tunda Asraja. There are eight more such indications for singing eight different vars. These popular tunes were sung in the praise of heroic deeds of nobles who fought for ethical causes. Their suffering and ultimate victory over evil inspired musicians to compose these vars which were very popular in those days. As already noted, the main theme of the vars included in Guru Granth Sahib is the praise of God.

Besides vars, the Sikh Gurus used the folk tunes of 'Ghorian' which were sung by the ladies when bridegroom used to ride the horse. Similarly, there were four *lavan* which are now used for marriage ceremony. There is also Alahia metre which is used for mourning song. The Gurus used these metres but with changed contents. These metres have been based on spirituality. The Gurus only used folk metres to convey their message of spiritual elevation.

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The Interfaith Movement : Call of a larger God

—Elizabeth Espersen

May we begin with the Mool Mantra, the wonderful prayer with which a Sikh begins the day, because it will place us deeply in the presence of God :

*There is One God Whose Name is Truth,
The Creator, Without fear, without hate.
Eternal Being, Beyond birth and death,
Self-existent,
Realized by the Guru's grace.*

Now, I would like to share a quotation taken from one of the papers in the book, *Guru Nanak : A Global Vision*, which touched my heart and enhances the prayer we have just said :

"... In every living religion there is a point at which the religion itself loses its importance, and that to which it points breaks through its particularity, elevating it to spiritual freedom and with it to a vision of spiritual presence in other expressions of the ultimate meanings of human existence". (Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh)

I find this statement from the chapter, *Guru Nanak : Founder of a World Religion*, to be appropriate to the times in which we live and to our purposes here. Religions, of course, are human constructs, though we often forget that, and make them into divine

realities. As such, it is easy for them to become encrusted with our small human understandings, and to lose the possibility for knowing God that every religion contains. Guru Nanak was not constrained by a smallness of vision, but was able to reach the point where religion breaks through to the Divine, and the Divine because it is the Divine—illuminates the merely human intelligence with the greatness of itself. I suspect that there are wise seekers after God in every religious tradition who have reached this break through point: they have met the Larger God. By this I mean that God is greater than humans. Too often—in every religion—we have cut God down to our size and made God in our image and likeness. This is foolishness on our part; God is greater than we, and large enough for all humanity. Indeed God deals in differing, but beautiful ways with all of us. This is an opportunity for rejoicing and celebration as we discover the challenge of learning about each other.

The Role of the Founder

Founders of religions are people who have met the Larger God. As I know Jesus Christ as I have read about Guru Nanak, this seems true of both of them. The founder is deeply rooted in his own temporal situation of space/place and time. Within that situation, he takes time to know and to cultivate an intimate relationship with God, so much so that the interaction between God and the founder becomes evident to others as he begins to develop a following. God “speaks” through the founder, who speaks in the “name” of God. Often this occurs in a counter-cultural way, as the founder of a faith tradition attempts to reform the evils or mis-information of the times. Finally, the founder may not see himself as beginning a new religion, but as conveying a message of God. The true founder lets go without abandoning his insight; followers then continue his teaching. It is important to bear in mind the role of the founder as we begin to look at The Interfaith Movement.

The Past ...The Present

It is not facetious to say that Interfaith Dialogue is the most important thing in the development of human consciousness today. Sharing our religious beliefs and spiritual commitment is closest and most intimate to the human heart, for spirituality informs our rites of growth and passage ; our rituals of family living. This sharing facilitates trust, respect and understanding among us, which then facilitates trust in our diversity and pluralism at every level.

If we look to the distant past, we find that we have come a very long way. Dr. Fred Streng, the late professor of the history of world religions at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, once observed that we have known :

- 2,000,000 years of erect anthropods
- 500,000 years ago the first tools were developed.
- 90,000 years ago the first burials were recorded.
- 28,000 years ago the first visuals of religious life were recorded.

From then on the growth of religion in isolated areas of the world has occurred over thousands of years, with slow migrations through travel and trade extending religions worldwide.

If we look to the present, we find that 99% of our knowledge of the universe has developed only in the last century. For the first time we have the power to annihilate the planet. For the first time we have the power to settle conflict through negotiation. For the first time, East and West are meeting consistently and constantly. For the first time, we all have access to all the scriptures and sacred writings of the world. For the first time, we can communicate instantly with people all over the world. There is an obvious intensification of activity, of time, of commitment. Today, religion is affecting many

areas of life more and more openly. What does this mean in terms of the interfaith movement?

The Interfaith Movement

The first of all, this means that in every urban area of any zone, one finds representatives of a great variety of religions. There are no longer only Christians and Jews in the United States, but Zoroastrians, Jains, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs, Baha'is as well as the original Indigenous peoples. In the traditionally Hindu and Buddhist nations such as India, Japan and Korea, we now find Christians, Jews and Muslims. We live our lives together and interact with one another on a daily basis. This has led to the development of various inter-religious associations and organizations at the local level. The purpose of many of these local groups is to facilitate understanding among the religions, to promote interactive cooperation about issues that the entire local community faces such as better education, adequate housing, abolition of drugs, teenage pregnancy and the like. Often within the United States, at least, ecumenical organizations for various Christian denominations have given way to inter religious groups that are open to all of the religions represented in an area. Buffalo Area Metropolitan Ministries (made up of groups representing all the world religions) has replaced the Buffalo Council of Christian Churches (made up only of various denominations of Christian Churches) ; in the same way, Wichita (Kansas) Interfaith Ministries replaced the Christian Council of Churches there many years ago. These interreligious groups have spoken as a united entity areas of moral concern and issues threatening to their communities.

Further, local groups have banded together to found regional groups. Again, the purpose is a deepened understanding of one another's faith traditions, and how the Larger God has called us to service so that the world might be a better place for all of us. The

Interfaith Network of Great Britain as well as the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN), both founded in the 1980s, are two such groups. In the case of NAIN, about 90 interreligious organizations from the United States, Canada and Mexico network together, sharing ideas and insight. The NAIN Connect Conference, held in a different city each year, brings people from all over North America together in pursuit of a broadened respect, understanding and appreciation within the religions. Finally, there are a number of international interfaith organizations that have created global networks and programs that assist humanity in realizing the potential for good that exists when religions interact harmoniously, attempting without fear to dispel ignorance.

The International Association for Religious Freedom (1900) is the oldest international interreligious organization, and the only one with corporate membership by constituent religious bodies from Africa, America, Asia and Europe. For more than a hundred years it has worked for multicultural understanding, peace and justice, and religious freedom.

The World Congress of Faiths (1936), based in London, furthers dialogue among peoples of different convictions about religious faith and practice. It hosts conferences in various areas of the world and links with like-minded groups to stimulate the Interfaith Movement.

The Temple of Understanding in New York, founded in 1960, has worked closely with the United Nations and held Spiritual Summit meetings there. It also gave birth to the Global Forum on Human Survival which brought religious and political leaders together in dialogue.

The Center for World Thanks-giving at Thanks-giving Square in Dallas, Texas was incorporated in 1964. Its purpose is simple : to acknowledge thanks-giving to God as a basic human act, and

thanks-giving among persons as a common bridge to understanding. Through the exploration of gratitude and praise in world religions and cultures, its mission is to witness, celebrate and promote these values in both sacred and secular cultures throughout the world.

The World Conference on Religion and Peace formed in 1970 as a consolidation of separate movements in India, Japan and the United States. It is dedicated to reaffirming religions' moral commitment to peace and to translating their shared concerns into practical effective action. WCRP convenes assemblies at local, regional and international levels to promote dialogue and commitment to action, especially on issues of peace and justice for all.

The Council for the Parliament of the World Religions, based in Chicago, has grown out of the ground breaking Parliament of World Religions held there in 1893. This organization held a hundredth anniversary of the Parliament of Chicago in 1993, and another in Capetown, South Africa in 1999. They plan to hold these meetings every five years. In 1993, they produced the document, *Towards a Global Ethic*, a statement ratified by more than 300 religious leaders from all over the world; in 1999 they formulated a second document, *Call to Our Guiding Institutions*, similarly signed by 300 such leaders. These documents, which have the binding power on the religions, do, nevertheless, contain a moral directive of global dimensions and stature.

The United Religions Initiative grew out of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the founding of the United Nations, held at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. After five years of intense annual meetings, this group has established Cooperation Circles around the world that are open to all who wish to discuss their spiritual commitment to a better world. This international group, more than any other, has opened its heart to people who have no main line

religious affiliation, but who are, all the same, committed to a spiritual journey. As such, it reaches out to the many individuals who know deep spiritual hunger in our times:

These identifications of interreligious organizations, though brief, give an overview of the comprehensive scope of interfaith work. Some groups concentrate on dialogue and celebration; others deal more directly with advocacy issues. Both types of work are needed; dialogue without action dissipates; action without dialogue burns out. Both types of work respond to that breakthrough moment when that to which religion points, manifests in a vision of spiritual presence in a variety of expression of the ultimate meanings of human existence.

The Future : What this means for Religions

As we work in the Interfaith Movement, there are certain things to acknowledge about each religion. Each makes an ontological claim that what/whoever God is, is God of all. This is the God of heaven and earth, the reality that proclaims everything and gives meaning to inner understanding and outer expression of any tradition's teaching. All religions make ethical claims demanding the reciprocity of loving kindness—that is, following the Golden Rule, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Finally, in each religion, we can find the sin of self-aggrandizement and of violence towards others. Perhaps this is at the root of why we do not get along. Many of us do not see our common base together; we do not realize that religion carries us beyond culture and tribe to what is profoundly of the spirit, motivating us at the deepest level. We do not see that point at which the religion itself loses its importance, and that to which it points—the Larger God—breaks through.

However, as we learn to reach out to one another, to let go of our own need to control, a wonderful and awesome thing occurs. We are found by the Larger God, and we recognize that others, not

of our persuasions, are also. The same deep, spiritual force of God is operative in a positive way in people of all faith traditions, opening us out, not closing us in. This is one of the significant aspects of sincere interreligious dialogue and cooperation. Through the prisms of our various religions but with a larger perspective, we find one another gratefully, we listen, learn and even love one another, and can then view issues and concerns of our times cooperatively. No one of us has a full hold on God, on God's truth, God, the truth—sat is larger than any one religion or one person, as founders of religion knew. This is a reality we must acknowledge in order to move into a new future together.

What then are our options ?

First of all, let me say what our options are not. We no longer have the option of splitting off in private isolation or aloof separatism; the challenge and opportunity for global communication is here now, and it is the inevitable path of the future. We no longer have the option of fear of the other, which is bred by ignorance, for such a fear paralyzes us into inaction and breeds hatred. Instead we have the challenge and opportunity to know deeply the beliefs, customs, rituals and culture of those different than we are. We no longer have the option of closing our doors to others and clinging protectively and secretively to our own turfs as given by history; the challenge and opportunity of sharing in trust and love is too enticing to be missed. Finally, we do not have the option of syncretizing religions into a melted-down mishmash of one religion for all. The Larger God has created, met and worked with us in our diversity. The challenge and opportunity of understanding each of our religions in depth will lead us to respect and appreciation and indeed, gratitude, for this diversity.

Having said this, the first option that we have is to stand deeply at the heart of our own religion with commitment, and then to realize

that others in other religions do the same. This is essential if we would come to that breakthrough point where we meet the Larger God. We need to intensify the exploration of our faith traditions at a deeper level than ever before, seeing as closely as possible as the founder saw. Each religion has certain unique ideas and methods. Learning about them enriches one's own faith. Only then will we truly reach out to others.

Another option is to develop an attitude that is open and positive, in keeping with the founder's view. In every religious tradition, we find some form of "The Golden Rule", the admonition to be kind and considerate of others. There are many ways to cultivate such an attitude. I think of two habits or virtues available to everyone, that directly affect such an attitude in the human person. One is compassion, that intense, compelling need to be with the other in their experience, their understanding of life. In our times, the Dalai Lama in speaking of compassion, which is a foremost attitude of Buddhism, has written and spoken extensively of the power of this virtue.

I believe that at every level of society –familial, tribal, national and international– the key to a happier and more successful world is the growth of compassion.... All that is necessary is for each of us to develop our good human qualities. I try to treat whoever I meet as an old friend. This gives me a genuine feeling of happiness. It is the practice of compassion. (Tenzin Gyasto, the XIV Dalai Lama)

The second virtue is gratitude or thanks-giving. Gratitude is the free, gratuitous expression of appreciation to the other –Divine or human– who has gifted one in some way. It is a reciprocal habit that involves sharing in order to be effective. In his book, *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*, Brother David Steindl-Rast notes

Gratefulness is the heart's full response to the gratuitousness of all that exists. And gratefulness makes us graceful in a double sense. In gratefulness we open ourselves to this gratuitous universe and so we become fully graced with it. And in doing so we learn to move gracefully with its flow, as in a universal dance.

The reality of modern times, this age of technology, challenges us to maintain an open attitude towards what is new and different. To do this in a stable way, while rooted in our own religious traditions, we need to cultivate—and believe that others also nurture—the attitudes of gratitude and compassion.

A further option involves the education of our children. This is of great concern to every faith tradition. Our children already live in an interactive world where they meet people of various religions. In some school systems in the United States, as many as seventy five different languages are spoken by students. This is just one manifestation of the diversity to which they are subjected at a very young age. An honest, open and positive attitude of young people toward those who are different that they are is healthy and wholesome. It allows young people to be inquisitive and appreciative of variety at the same time. Children will develop such an attitude if their parents, teachers and the wisdom leaders within their religious traditions inculcate such an attitude in them through example as well as teaching.

In each of our religious traditions, we have beautiful and meaningful rituals and customs. These can be used for the education of our children, and of one another. Rituals and customs make a deep impact, bring a religion alive, and should be shared abundantly. All of us will be the better for it.

We also have the option of realizing that we stand at the cutting edge of history. For the first time, the entire world is open to all of

us. We are discovering that the paradigms that worked in the past, do not do so today. We are still learning how to use the technology which is available; to us. We will have to discover how the past and present will serve the future, what is to be kept and cherished into new thinking and what is simply unnecessary dross to be let go of. We will have to refine the paradigms that have guided us so that they can lead us into tomorrow. And, as we do this, we will be called upon to do so in relation to one another. With an attitude that is open and positive, who knows that discoveries we shall make that deepen our experience and understanding of the Larger God!

Finally, all of these options demand one more : the option of energy and commitment. Interfaith work is demanding on a daily basis. It is not easy to always be compassionate, always open and grateful. It is not easy to go the extra mile for the different person, when it would be so relaxing to rest in what we are used to, what we are comfortable with. No, working in service of the Larger God means reaching, stretching, opening and giving—in love and generosity—every inch of the way. It means a constant discernment before God, of what God wants. But the rewards of such effort, energy and commitment are measured in spiritual growth, and they are rich indeed.

Stories of encounter with larger God

There is spiritual hunger and thirst alive and well in the world today. The fact that we are here is proof of that. The tide is turning against the emptiness of materialism and self-centredness. Not only in mainline religions, but among those who do not affiliate with any religion, we find this hunger for God. It is everywhere and it is not only human hunger but the desire of the Divine to reach us, all of us. Let me briefly share four instances from four continents.

From Guatemala

His dark eyes sparkled as he spoke of his people, the ancient Mayans who had carved the beautiful stone messages into the upright slabs all around us. We stood on the floor of the green bright jungle, dwarfed among trees and ruins, old beyond calculation. The young man was a Mayan guide and we were at Tikal, in the Guatemalan Peten. "Tikal" means "the place where spirit voices are heard" and it was once one of the largest centers of Mayan civilization (600 B.C.E.-900 C.E.).

"Indeed", I mused as I observed our guide, "he has heard the spirit voices and carries within himself, like a warrior's shield, the great spiritual sustenance that is his heritage". As we stood in the primal rawness that lingers among such ruins, he continued speaking of complex mathematics, astrology and creation stories. The spirit voices seemed to echo his accounts in the whispering of the giant trees. The spirit ancestors affirmed this young son of their race with his fierce pride, as he told in modern times, the ancient wisdom teachings of his people.

Then the bubble burst and the mystic vision disappeared. Someone questioned our guide about his future. "Oh, much I love this, I only do it during the summer" he said. "In the fall, I am going to the University in Guatemala City to study computer science. That's where all the money is!"

Question : How does the Interfaith Movement help such a young person maintain his deep love of his heritage while at the same time come of age in the modern world "where the money is".

From Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

A very beautiful young woman of obvious mixed-racial background attended a meeting of the North American Interfaith

Network. At the opening discussion, she rose to ask where all the young people were. "I am of mixed race," she told us. "On my mother's side, I am Asian and African; on my father's European. I want to share all of this heritage spiritually, but I have not been able to find ways to do it. I came, hoping to meet other young people with whom I could speak of religious commitment, spiritual desire, God, and my own heritage. Where are they?

Question : How does the Interfaith Movement open to and involve young people in its work? After all, the youth are the hope of the future, the future of the religions and of their cooperation.

From Vrindaban, Birth place of Lord Krishna, India

Her face was radiant and her smile warm as the sunshine. Though she was bent in two at the waist, perhaps from osteoporosis, and shuffle-walked with difficulty, she had a serene aura about her. Her "place" was a small blanket-sized area outside the Krishna-Balaram Mandira, the Hare Krishna temple in Vrindaban, birthplace of Lord Krishna. I noticed her, not because of her deformity, but because of her joyousness. "She is of the untouchable caste," I was told. "But she is always like that —filled with joy. She is a beggar woman, and saves the coins that she is given until a feast. Then she takes them all to the shrine of Krishna and gives them as offerings. She seems to realize that is what is asked of her". I thought of the woman in the Christian gospel who had only two small coins, but who offered them in the temple. Jesus said of her, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have given of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on". (Mark 12:42-3)

Question : Can the Interfaith Movement learn from such a person? Can someone in one religion learn a valuable lesson from a person of another faith tradition?

From Belfast, Northern Ireland

She was the mother of two small girls, deserted by her husband who was an alcoholic. There was little work in the war torn city of Belfast where she lived. She had only two small potatoes in her cupboard and she didn't want to get out of bed. She realized she could stay there and feel sorry for herself, or she could get up and give thanks that she did at least have the potatoes. She opted for giving thanks and wondered what she would do when they were gone. Before the day was out, a knock came on her door. "I'm bringing you a chicken" said the neighbour from up the road. "Six months ago you did me a good turn and now I can pay you back". She realized that her gratitude had been reciprocated, which led to even greater gratitude on her part, for her prayer had been answered. She began to consider its impact.

She became a Christian Scientist healer, and travelled to America to see Thanks-Giving Square in Dallas. Once there, she realized that such a concept could contribute to peace in her poor and troubled city. Back in Belfast once again, she opened her doors to people of all religions, not just Protestants and Catholics, but Jews and Hindus and Buddhists and Muslims —any and all who would come. They spoke of thanks-giving together, built up an organization, and spread the word about it through seminars, educational contests and other activities. One likes to think that two potatoes and one woman's gratefulness have nudged war torn Belfast a bit closer to peace.

Question : Do we in Interfaith Movement make the small efforts in our own homes and local areas, the efforts that can move the World to a better place?

CONCLUSION

All over the world people are living the hope and expectation of a more peaceful world. All over the world people are looking to religion to take the lead in bringing about the fulfillment of these hopes. If we, who work in religion, are to assist in this effort, we must have the new/old eyes of founders. We must break beyond the point where the religion loses its particular importance and points to the vision of a spiritual presence that gives ultimate meaning to human existence. Genuine interreligious dialogue and cooperative action will be necessary. We need a new perception, a shift of paradigms, the gift of discernment in our thinking and our values. We need to move from fragmentation to wholeness, from domination to partnership, from quantity to quality, from tolerance to love marked by compassion and gratitude.

Then will the reality of the Larger God breakthrough and the words of one founder of a world religion be fulfilled :

Says Nanak :

May Your Name, Your glory, O God!

Be ever in ascendance!

May the whole humanity be blessed

With peace and prosperity,

In Your will, by Your grace.

(Concluding Verse, The Sikh Prayer, Ardas)

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18th Century European Perspective of the Sikhs and their Scripture

—Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon

A cursory glance at the early 18th century medieval India reveals that the Mughal Empire was on its decline and new powers were emerging on the political horizon. The historians have attributed various factors that led to the weakening of Mughal authority and subsequent rise of successor states in different parts of the country. The emergence of these regional forces—the Marathas in the Deccan, the Jats in and around Bharatpur and the Sikhs in Punjab, were chiefly responsible for the extinction of Mughal authority in their respective regions. Significantly, the British had consolidated their position in Bengal to gain control of Orissa and Bihar. Alarmed by political instability coupled with desire to secure their territorial and commercial interests they were watching very closely the tussle for supremacy that was going at the Mughal court.

Sikh Struggle for Sovereignty:

There is no denying the fact that after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, the Sikhs under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur had conquered a large tract of Punjab territory to replace the Mughal authority with a new administration. The first Sikh rule, which lasted for a short while (June 1710 to December 1715), was unique in its various dispensations. It could not last long or face the might of the State as its military resources were too meager compared

to the Mughals. The manner, in which the Sikhs and Banda Singh Bahadur was martyred at Delhi in 1716, had signalled the reign of terror and nature of cruelty, they were to face in the near future. The Mughal Emperors had no qualms to pass orders to exterminate the Sikhs as a religious community. The successive Mughal Governors of Lahore -Abdus Samad Khan (1716-1724), Zakariya Khan (1726-1745) and Muin-ul Mulk (1748-1753) followed a ruthless policy to persecute the Sikhs. Prices on their heads were fixed; they were sought and hunted like wild beasts. To execute them publicly in the most barbaric and cruel manner in the crossings chowks of Lahore, was a common practice of those times.¹ The Sikhs were compelled to seek shelter in the Shivalik hills or in the deserts of Rajputana. They were also hard pressed to save themselves from the successive onslaughts of their new adversary, the Afghans who were vying to gain control of the Punjab on their unhindered passage to Delhi, the seat and symbol of sovereignty of Hindustan. All these odds could not deter the Sikhs in their resolve to overthrow the unjust rule to become the sovereigns of Punjab. Ultimately time arrived when the Sikhs controlled the whole country from the Indus to the Jamuna.² They not only expelled the successors of Ahmed Shah Abdali from the provinces of Multan and Kashmir but also turned the tables against them to lead military expeditions across the Indus. Militarily speaking they made the North West Frontiers of India so invulnerable that now people were no more at the mercy of foreign invaders coming across the Hindu Kush since the times of Alexander. The legacy to secure the north-west frontiers by the Sikhs is unforgettable in the history of India and the people of India are beholden to them for it.

The period under review for its various reasons is considered a dark period in the history of the Sikhs. However it presents a glorious

saga of Sikh struggle when the Sikh spirit- religiously, socially and politically was at its pinnacle. Generally, it is remarked that the Sikhs who rose like a Phoenix have given scant attention to record their annals. Truly what is written by the contemporary and near contemporary writers has come out of the pen of outsiders. Sometimes these chronicles lack in objectivity and neutrality, the two most sought after principles for doing the history. Occasionally, these sources instead of supplementing each other provide divergent accounts, which at times are hardly to reconcile. Prof. W.H. Mcleod has aptly remarked that our knowledge of eighteenth century Sikh Panth is very limited. He is sceptical of the Khalsa tradition and suggests that "the slate must be wiped clean and must not be reinscribed until we have ascertained just what did take place during the eighteenth century.³ Very truly the historians working on the 18th century Sikh history have always felt the dearth of authentic source material. The works on Sikh history and religion produced in the recent past are invariably based on the documents introduced a half century ago. Very little has been done to unearth fresh material. In this context European writings produced in the 18th century deserve our special attention.

Nature of European Writings

The stories of Sikh struggle, especially their resistance to the Afghans of Ahmed Shah Abdali, had travelled to far away places such as Fort William, the head quarters of British East India Company. The Sikh incursions into Gangetic Doab had brought them face to face with the British forces stationed in the Avadh. Their growing ascendancy in the North-West of India was a potent threat to the hegemonic designs of the British in India. For more than one reason the British were anxious to know about the Sikhs and their religion, obviously to formulate their policy towards them. Besides

commissioning the civil servants to get information in a clandestine manner, the British residents with the Nawab of Avadh and the Marathas and those stationed at Delhi were pressed into service to keep a vigil on the Sikhs. They were asked to collect every possible information on the Sikhs. Some of the British residents were friendly with the Sikh Chiefs and were constantly in touch with them.

Besides the British East India Company servants, Europeans of various nationalities and belonging to different strata in society had got attracted to the exotic beauty and diversity of Indian culture. Consequently, they were writing on the 18th century India for different reasons and motives. The Christian missionaries who came in wake of the Company were looking into the religious beliefs and practices of the people. The Orientalists, who were intellectually oriented, were delving deep into the Eastern classical literature. The travellers, explorers and geographers were traversing the country to know intimately India's past as well as its topographical features. Not only the British, the Portuguese, French, Dutch, German, Irish and Scottish nationals who came to India in various capacities were not lagging behind to record their impression of the people of India. Their accounts published in quasi-historical form provide significant insights into the 18th century life of the people of India. While dealing with Indian life in general, these writers have also commented on the Sikhs and their religion. To recapitulate, the 18th century European writings have come to us in various forms and owe their origin to different sources.

Irrespective of their nationalities most of the 18th century European authors got interested in the Sikhs chiefly because of political considerations. While writing on the Sikhs they encountered a few problems of which dearth of authentic material, absence of personal contacts and ignorance of knowledge of Punjabi, the language

of the Sikhs, were the prominent ones.⁴ Most of the 18th century accounts by the Europeans on the Sikh history and religion are the product of individual efforts though some of them were specially commissioned by the British East India Company. These accounts are based on the personal observations of their authors and the information they got from the persons who pretended of possessing authentic knowledge about the Sikhs. Sometimes they got information about the Sikhs through the Persian chronicles which at times were not correct and free from prejudice. Resultantly, a number of factual mistakes have crept into their accounts which have been repeated by the later European authors while writing on the Sikhs. Another feature of these writing is that some of them have not been presented in a coherent and systematic manner. Sometimes information is very brief and many of the authors have remarked about the Sikhs in a casual manner. A few of the writers had reflected strong bias towards the Sikhs. They had labelled the Sikhs as 'the terror and plague' and desired the British to exterminate this 'evil' from India.⁵ Chiefly because of the political reasons they had circulated a prophecy attributed to the Sikh Gurus that the Sikhs after remaining sometime the terror of India would at last be finally destroyed by white men coming from the westward.⁶ In spite of all these drawbacks 18th century accounts are very important as they throw immense light on some of the lesser known facets of Sikh religious life of 18th century. It is worth noting that Prof. Ganda Singh has done a pioneer work to produce *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* in 1962. At that time he introduced the writings of nine authors, which have significant bearings on the Sikh history and religion. Since then no scholar has taken interest to carry the work forward. For the last four years I have been following the subject very keenly. For the present study we have identified about 30 European authors of 18th century who have commented upon the Sikhs in one or another form.

Earliest Observations

The earliest reference to the Sikhs by any European has come to us in a letter of Sep. 25, 1606 of Father Jerome Xavier written from Lahore to the Jesuits Provincial Supervisor of Goa. In this letter he talks about Guru Arjan's holy and saintly personality who enjoyed dignity and reputation as well. He testifies that before his martyrdom Guru Arjan went through a series of torture.⁷ In the eighteenth century first reference to the Sikhs again occurs in a letter of March 10, 1716 by Messrs John Surman and Edward Stephenson to the Hon'ble Robert Hedges, President and Governor of Fort William etc. Council of Bengal. John Surman was leading British Embassy to the Mughal Court and was present when Banda Singh Bahadur and his Sikh associates met martyrdom at the hands of Mughal authorities. He admired the steadfastness and forbearance of the Sikhs who were being executed a hundred a day in the Chandni Chowk of Delhi. He pays a glowing tribute and says, "it is not a little remarkable with what patience they undergo their fate, and to the last it has not been found that one apostatized from his new formed Religion."⁸ These two letters of great historical value and the evidence offered by them help us to understand the Sikh tradition of martyrdom, a major phenomenon of 18th century Sikhism.

European Perspective of Sikhism

A close reading of the 18th century European writings on the Sikhs reveals that almost all the authors are unanimous in their view that Sikhism owes its origin to Guru Nanak. They have not found any connection- doctrinal or historical between Guru Nanak and the Sant tradition. They underline that the doctrines on which Sikhism is based were introduced by Guru Nanak himself.⁹ They remark that Guru Nanak gave birth to a new religious dispensation. Some of these authors equate Guru Nanak and his successors with the Prophets and

Pope. Perhaps it was mainly because of their Judo-Christian background. The Sikh institution of Guruship and its central place in the Sikh society had come to their notice quite at an early stage.¹⁰ There is no controversy in them with respect to the nature of God in Sikhism. They found that Sikhs are theists and believe in the unity of Divine Being. James Browne testifies that veneration in Sikhism is not paid to minor deities.¹¹ Crouford says that "Nanuck having stripped the religion of Brihma of its mythology, the Seiks adore God alone, without image or intermediation."¹² Similarly Thomas Pennat remarks that the Sikhs are pure monotheists. They worship God alone without image or intermediation. According to Tieffenthaler, the 18th century Sikhs admit only one God worthy of adoration and vehemently deny divinity to Hindu Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadev.¹³ Modave, another French author remarks that the Sikhs have broken free from the yoke of most of the Brahmanical superstitions.¹⁴

Sikh Society

Interestingly most of the authors have taken note of the proselytizing character of Sikhism and its impact on the Indian society. They remark that unlike the Hindus the Sikhs admit proselytes of all religions and castes. They found that entry into Sikhism was open to all. In the words of A.L. H. Polier, 'the Sikhs came from the lowest and most abject castes'.¹⁵ According to Father, Wendel, "Guru Gobind Singh inspired them to have no regard to the distinction of caste.... Everyone could be a Sikh".¹⁶ Another source reveals that Sikhs make up a body of all types of pagans.¹⁷ Forester and Tieffenthaler find that the Sikh Panth is composed of the Khalsa (baptized) and Khulasa (unbaptised) Sikhs.¹⁸ We find that some European authors of this period had come to know that inter-locking of religion with politics is one of the chief characteristics of Sikhism.¹⁹

Initiation into Sikhism

Many of these sources have also remarked on the 18th century Sikh institutions of Sarbat Khalsa and Gurmatta which were held in Amritsar once or twice a year. Significantly Pahul, the initiation ceremony and the Khalsa code of conduct have also found mention in them. James Brown informs, 'in admitting proselyte they make him drink a sherbet out of a large cup with certain ceremonies which are designed to signify that every distinction is abolished except that being of Sikh, even a Muslim may become a Sikh on these conditions....From the time he is admitted into the fraternity he wears a steel ring around one of his wrists, lets his hair and beard grow to full length and call on the name of Guru in confirmation of all engagements'.²⁰ He further remarks that 'Guru Gobind Singh established a ceremony to be used on the reception of new proselyte which is called Puhul and consists in making them drink sherbet out of a cup stirring it round with a dagger and pronouncing a certain incantation at the same time'.²¹ Charles Wilkins mentions that five or more persons at any place can administer the initiation ceremony.²² Though the Khalsa symbols —Kirpun, Kesh, Kangha, Kara and Kachhaihira have not been described in rubric terms yet all of them find mention in one or another source.²³ They are near unanimous to point out that use of tobacco is strictly prohibited. George Thomas says 'in the city or in the field the Seiks never smoke tobacco'.²⁴ Wendel observes that Sikhs did not touch women nor their clothes or jewels.²⁵ A.L.H. Polies says that they repeat Waheguru several times a day.²⁶

Sikh Way of Worship

On the mode and object of worship almost all the French authors note that the Sikhs do not admit any images or sculptures.²⁷ Forester observes, 'their places of devotion are plain and divested of every

ornament and figures'. Modave sums up very beautifully the change that Sikh revolution had ushered in India. He remarks 'Sikhs are extremely satisfied with the changes occurring in their religion as well as in their government. All those with whom I had the opportunity to talk about these subjects did not seem to have retained any of the superstitions of other Indians. Even the insignificant practices have been abandoned as soon as the least connection with the religious rites was found. At least it is perhaps unprecedented that a community should have given up so easily the laws and customs carried on since so many centuries'.²⁸ Charles Wilkins who had the opportunity to visit Takht Patna Sahib observed that the Sikh places of worship were open to all."²⁹

Sikh Scripture

Though language was the major problem yet 18th century European authors have remarked on the origin, role, status and teachings of the Sikh scripture in a very significant manner. Most of them observe that its genesis lies with Guru Nanak. Father Wendel was perhaps the first European who had observed the Sikh scripture from close quarters. He underlines its prominent features especially language and teachings. He writes, 'What we can say of his (Guru Nanak) writings and dogma was gifted with noble knowledge. There are volumes of his doctrines put together and they are still read today with devotion and admiration.'³⁰ He claims first hand information and says, "I have seen some of these books written in Persian and in the Indian language of Panjabi that is as it is spoken around Lahore. Baba Nanak expresses himself quite nobly in them and with an elevated spirit on the essence of God and the divine attributes with which the devotees are delighted. His other works or morals are no less sensitive. There are many who read them but few understand them without an interpreter due to the way in which he expresses

as well as due to the language".³¹ Obviously Father Wendell had access to the Sikh scripture to note its spiritual value and aesthetic beauty as well.

Like Father Wendel other European authors had also noted that the Sikh scriptural writings are recorded in Gurmukhi or Panjabi script. Charles Wilkins writing in 1781 holds that Guru Nanak himself invented the Gurmukhi script. According to him Guru Nanak "left behind him a book, composed by himself in verse and the language of the Punjab but a character partly of his own invention, which teaches the doctrines of the faith he had established. That they called this character, in honour of their founder, Goaroo-Moothee: from the mouth of the preceptor".³² Similarly Crauford reiterates that the Sikh scripture is written in the Punjab dialect but in a particular character called Gurmukhi. He holds that credit goes to Guru Angad for preserving Guru Nanak's bani, which is quite in consonance with the Sikh tradition. He holds that Guru Nanak "entrusted to Guru Angad the care of his percepts which he accordingly did in a Pothi".³³ James Browne remarks that Guru Nanak not only took efforts to record his bani but also laboured hard to distribute it among his followers. He understood that Guru Nanak's writings were at the base of the Sikh ideology. He says that Guru Nanak "wrote several books upon the nature and institutions of his order.....which he distributed for the regulation of the worship of his followers."³⁴ George Forester alludes to the fact that bani of Guru Nanak is an instrument for Divine communication. He finds that instead of the intermediation of inferior Deities they are ordered to address the Supreme Being through the medium of Nanak his favorite agent Deputy.³⁵ Writing towards the end of 18th century William Francklin takes note of the Sikh belief that bani of Guru Nanak is of Divine origin.³⁶ James Browne remarks that 'Guru Arjan wrote the Gurunt'.³⁷ Obviously in doing so he was

alluding to Guru Arjan's role in canonizing the *Adi Granth* in 1604. Similarly John Griffiths emphasises that "the tenets of Nanak have been collected into a Book which they call their *Ghiruntejee* (*Granth Ji*) and guard as a sacred Deposit or rather Oracle, at a place called *Amberser*."³⁸

Our 18th century European authors hold that *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture had been fully installed in the *Gurdwaras*. Charles Wilkins who had an opportunity to join the Sikh congregation in *Patna Sahib*,³⁹ provides a graphic account of the Sikh liturgy which was wholly based and centred on *Guru Granth Sahib*. *Nota Manus*, another European who also had a chance to visit a *Gurdwara*, subscribes to the above point of view. He says "One day I got within one of their temples invited there to by the tingling of cymbals. On appearing within the door, an old venerable man bid me leave my slippers as one could enter bare footed. This admonition, I obeyed and went into the hall covered with carpets at the northern part of which there were several cushions covered with yellow veil under which I was told lay *Nanak-Shah's* book, who is their legislator. At the southern end of the hall there were fifteen or twenty men, all in blue and with long beard, sitting, some armed and some not. At the eastern side but very near to it, two of old men with a small drum and a pair of cymbals, were singing some maxims of morality out of that book and this did with a deal of enthusiasm and contortion."⁴⁰ Obviously, in the eyes of these Europeans the Sikh mode of worship comprised singing and reading of hymns from the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The object of worship and veneration was nothing else but the sole scripture, i.e. *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The nature and functions of *Sarbat Khalsa* and *Gurmata*, the two most important Sikh institutions of eighteenth century had also come under the notice of European authors. John Griffiths alludes

to them and hold that they were held in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. He remarks that the Sikhs "Guard Guru Granth Sahib as a sacred Deposit or rather Oracle at a place called Ambersur.... Here they assemble in great numbers (150 or 200,000) at two fixed periods of the years, about October and April, to consult upon their warlike operations. The decision of the Oracle (Vak, Hukam) whether for war or peace, they invariably adhere to their Book."⁴¹ It suggests that Guru Granth Sahib was not only an object of worship but also enjoyed Divine status among the Sikhs. The Sarbat Khalsa (Ground Assembly) used to hold deliberations on the religious and secular affairs confronting the Panth. After arriving at a consensus and to put a seal on its finality, commandment (Vak) was taken from Guru Granth Sahib. Thus the collective decision of the Panth took the form of Gurmata which enjoyed the status of Divine Order and the whole Panth was religiously and morally was bound to adhere to it. These writings provide a glimpse how the institution of Guru Granth-Guru Panth had come to prevail in the 18th century Sikh Panth.

As far as the philosophy or message of Guru Granth is concerned, Father Wendel is the first European who has commented upon it very briefly. He remarks that Guru Nanak expresses himself 'quite nobly' and 'with an elevated spirit on the essence of God'.⁴² Charles Wilkins during his short stay in Patna Sahib grasped the message of Guru Granth Sahib to put it in a forthright manner. He says "that this book of which that standing near the altar, and several others in the hall, were copies, teaches that there is but one God, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, filling all space and pervading all matter: and that He is to be worshipped and invoked. That there will be day of retribution, when virtue will be rewarded and vice punished. (I forgot to ask in what manner)., that it not only commands universal toleration but forbids murder, theft, and such other deeds as are, by

the majority of the mankind, esteemed crime against society., and inculcates the practice of all the virtues but particularly universal philanthropy, and a general hospitality to strangers and travellers. This is all my short visit would permit me to learn this book.”⁴³ Significantly Charles Wilkins had noted the presence of a Hinoovee text at Patna but it was not of much consequence. Tieffenthaler testifies that the Sikhs had rejected the eighteen Puranas or book of the Pagans taking as fables whatever is said about Brahma, Bishnu and Mahadeo.⁴⁴ George Forester who travelled through Punjab remarks that “A book entitled Granth, Which contains the civil and religious institutes of Nanack, is the only typical object which the sicques have admitted into their places of worship.”⁴⁵

Conclusion

An analysis of all these writings reveals that 18th century European authors have offered their comments on almost all the important features of the 18th century Sikh Panth. One can easily note that in one or another manner origin and development of Sikhism, Sikh beliefs and practices, composition of Sikh society, social and religious institution, dress and diet, mode and object of worship, the origin, role and status of Guru Granth Sahib have found treatment in these works. In their opinion the theoretical, practical and sociological boundaries of Sikhism were well defined. These sources throw immense light on the lesser known facts of Sikh religious life. Though their description of the eighteenth century Sikhs lacks in details yet it is sufficiently equipped to reinscribe the “clean slate.”

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Ethical Values in Guru Granth Sahib

—Dr. Jaswinder Kaur Dhillon

There is no human society that does not have well-established codes or rules of conduct, both individual and socio-political. There are various ethical theories or moral philosophies to explain the principles by which men ought to live. Men are continually judging their own conduct and that of their fellow beings. Some acts are approved and others are condemned. The good traits of character are called virtues and the bad traits are called vices. Ethics is a study of human values, i.e. concepts about good and bad. It attempts to stimulate the moral sense to discover the values of life and inspire men to join in the quest for these values.

Ethics has always been viewed as the cradle of good and happy life by all religions. Religion without moral insight may become narrow and divisive and may reinforce the prejudices and hatreds between men. Ethical religion tends to unite men and stimulate respect for human personality, regardless of the barriers of tribe, class nationality or race. Religion has always stimulated moral standards and moral ideals that constitute an ethical socio-political structure. Guru Granth Sahib, the scripture of the Sikhs contains the ethical teachings of their Gurus and more than thirty Hindu and Muslim sages, intertwined with metaphysical and religious declarations. It is a great source of inspiration for religious aspirations and universal brotherhood. It is a comprehensive guide for ethico-religious living

as it shows the path for all round wholesome life. No wonder guruship was bestowed upon it by the last living Guru of the Sikhs.

Propounding that since God had created everything out of Himself and also abides Himself in everything, man and his soul being a part of God himself, gurbani enshrined in *Guru Granth Sahib*, exhorts man to realise the truth by spiritual knowledge imparted by a true Guru, and try to become God like. In the manner of Vedanta, Sikhism too preaches that the ideal goal of human life is the reemergence of the human soul back into God, the Supreme Soul, from which it had parted at God's pleasure, thus ending the woeful duality with the Creator. Man could realise this fact only through spiritual knowledge imparted by a true Guru and strive to achieve re-mergence with God, which would get him mukhti by ending his rebirths in numerous types of lives created by God. This re-mergence could be won by man by winning the grace of God only by following the path of ethical living and worship of God (bhagti) shown by the true Guru.

Virtues or sadgun are the essentials of ethicality or ethical living. Virtues are considered significant since ages. Plato had recognised wisdom, courage, temperance and justice as the chief virtues. Jain philosophy used the terms of punya (charity) and dharma (morality) for virtues. In Nyaya school of thought, the term shubhya (goodness) is employed. In *Guru Granth Sahib*, such great importance is accorded to the virtues that it is held that bhagti is impossible without them.¹ The person who practices ethical living is called a sachiar and often such a person is equated with gurmukh or even God. In the phrase “ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਣੀਏ ਸਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ”² the word sachiar is used for God, while in the phrase “ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ”³ the word sachiar is used for gurmukh. To the question in the latter phrase, the answer given in the gurbani is that man can become sachiar only

by abiding by the hukam of God, or in other words following the path shown by God. And, of course, the path shown by God is to follow the path of virtues or ethical living.

Regarding ethics or ethical living, the central concept of the gurbani is that man reaps the fruit of his deeds (karam).⁴ It is held that good deeds earn good fortunes, while base deeds beget woes and worries.⁵ In the court of the Almighty everybody has to account for his deeds.⁶ Souls adjudged for good deeds gain glory and Grace of God.⁷ Souls attain closeness with, or are repulsed away from, the Supreme Soul only according to the goodness or vileness of their deeds.⁸ One who commits sins has to pay for them,⁹ nobody can escape the retribution for evil deeds.¹⁰ This is the basis of the karam-doctrine of Sikhism, and Hinduism also, that the type of birth (whether in human or other species of life) and type of life (happy and prosperous, or woeful) is pre-ordained according to the deeds of the soul in previous births. This pre-determination is also known as karam, in another of its meaning denoting fate or bhag, which are pre-determined according to one's deeds, that is, karam in its other meaning.

In Guru Granth Sahib, the term "karam" is also used in its Persian meaning of "mehar", or the Grace of God. Thus the term karam is used in Guru Granth Sahib in three distinct meanings: fate, moral deeds and Divine Grace. It is asserted that fate is the fruit of one's deeds and while the soul wanders indefinitely in an unbroken cycle of re-births in various species of life according to the intensity of its bad deeds,¹¹ birth into human life is the fruit of exceptionally good deeds in previous lives.¹² Human disposition is also moulded by the deeds of the previous births,¹³ according to which one commits good or bad deeds in ones present life, which in turn determines whether one would deserve liberation or remain stuck in the cycle of rebirths. Human life is also considered a rare opportunity for the

soul to ameliorate the action and effect of all the previous misdeeds through ethical deeds and bhagti to improve its fate and if possible attain mukti from avagaon (rebirths) by winning God's Grace.

The karam-doctrine of Guru Granth Sahib does not hold like the Hindu doctrine that the fate determined by bad deeds of the previous births is inviolable and cannot be improved, owing to which man has to totally surrender himself to his fate, which way of thinking had often encouraged pessimism and sannayas in traditional Hinduism. The philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib accepts God to be just and benevolent, and holds that although all the worldly affairs and systems are run under the control of God's hukam or Divine-will, yet His writ which determines man's fate is ruled by man's deeds, and therefore, man can have his fate improved through good deeds.¹⁴ Mukti, the premier ideal of human life, can only be achieved by winning Grace of God, which in turn can be won through ethical deeds, yet even ethicality is practiced by only such persons who are blessed by God's Grace.¹⁵ In Var Sarang of Guru Granth Sahib, it is clearly held that mukti can be attained only with God's Grace and its best means, bhagti (worship of God), which can grow only from disposition for ethicality, is practised only by people of good fortunes.¹⁶ And since good fortunes or good fate is gained by good deeds, ethical living is essential to win God's Grace and mukti.

Yet, gurbani disparages the show off of pseudo-ethicality as futile. "Those claiming to be charitable, give away charity out of earnings of sins, misguided by their priestly mentors who frequent their homes and impart false religious instructions."¹⁷ On the other hand what gurbani extols is, "In amiability and humility lies the essence of merit and virtue."¹⁸ Commenting sadly that "Morality and decency have just vanished,"¹⁹ most of the preaching of Guru Granth is addressed to instilling highest morals amongst the devotees by

asserting, "Your dispensation (before God) is according to your good or bad deeds."²⁰ Describing the importance of morality it is propounded that although "The truth is the highest, but higher still is truthful living".²¹ The gospel of Guru Granth contains extensive views regarding the "truthful living" or ethical living that is manifested in the spheres of personal, social, political and religious morality, ethics and virtuosity.

In the sphere of **personal ethics**, teachings of gurbani emphasize ethical living and conduct above everything and lay great stress on man and his improvement. Man is required to transform his narrow egoistic perspective to realize the ideal self. Self-realization is the basis for morality according to the authors of the bani (hymns) preserved in Guru Granth Sahib. The importance of human virtues (gunas) like truthfulness, honesty, chastity, humility, compassion, love, patience, contentment, pity, forgiveness, tolerance and temperance, is emphasized by all the Banikars. They recognize God as the source of all the virtues. They hold that as many are the vices so many are the chains around one's neck, and declare that devotion without virtue is impossible. Even the knowledge that does not mould man ethically is futile. Only he who inculcates Virtues can be considered learned. Ethicality is pre-requisite for attaining spirituality. Good deeds (shubh karam) are the essence of ideal life.

Lust (kam), anger (krodh), greed (lobh), attachment (moh) and vanity (ahankar) are the bane of harmony in a society. Man's ego (haumai) is the root-cause of all these vices. Guru Granth immortalises Guru Arjan's words:

*Lust, wrath, intoxication with pelf and envy —
All these in our gamble we lost.*

*Truth, contentment, compassion and righteousness —
To all these in our home we accorded entry.*

*Annulled is burden of birth and death,
 As in holy company is the mind purified;
 Thus the master, perfectly endowed
 In an instant has saved us.
 Now does the self reckon itself dust of feet of all;
 All to it now appear cherished friends.
 The Lord's vision is beheld pervading all;
 Keeping in mind all creation, bestowing boons.²²*

Regarding worldly pursuits of wealth and position, Guru Granth has interesting way of condemning it: "Royal authority, estates, beauty of youth, grand mansions, passion of beauteous females, great wealth, elephants, steeds, jewels costing millions –none of these will be of any use at the time of reckoning at the Divine portal in the hereafter. Proud men shall depart, leaving all these behind."²³ "The wealth, man garners amidst curses of the victims, does not remain loyal to him nor it lasts forever. It makes the man selfish and vain for which reasons God forsakes him and even his high caste and position serves no purpose."²⁴ On the other hand "Those who efface their vanity and pride and become humble remain happy, while the very haughty are consumed by their own pride."²⁵ "Whoever reckon themselves lowest of all, are considered supreme. One whose mind is humble, and who considers himself as the dust of feet of all, sees vision of the Divine Reality in all human beings."²⁶ "Such a person does not contemplate evil of others, and therefore, no suffering touches him."²⁷ Thus according to gurbani, a person whose egotism is effaced in holy company becomes pre eminent among his peers.

As for social ethics, it is not much different from the personal ethics, because person is the basis of the society. For example the vices of bribery, injustice, inequality, lying, stealing, slandering, jealousy, violence, bickering, dishonesty etc. do not just concern with

one's own person but also with others, and therefore, are social too. Besides condemning these social vices, Guru Granth Sahib also condemns the social vices of casteism, untouchability, social derogation of women and sannayas, that is, asceticism. Service (sewa)²⁸ of humanity and love,²⁹ compassion,³⁰ equality³¹ and justice³² for all are considered the highest social virtues. To counter the anti-social tendency of sannayas in the Hindu society which was bringing much derogation and all around weakness in the Indian society, gurbani emphasises that achieving mukti is possible by practicing bhagti even while living and functioning ethically amongst ones family and friends discharging ones familial and social duties.³³

Gurbani asserts that, "Even though thieves, fornicators, harlots and procurers thrive and have great time and forsake their religions and prefer Satan's way, yet their evil will breeds evil just as a donkey will still roll in dust howsoever may he be cleaned and groomed."³⁴ "Selfish and greedy people who act like wild dogs thriving on carrion, bark out falsehoods, and shun righteous thinking, have no honour in life nor would they get it in the afterlife."³⁵ Adultery, begging and asceticism are also severely criticized. Equality, liberty and justice are the hallmarks of social ethics of Guru Granth Sahib.

Regarding the social derogation of women, which had reached great heights in the Indian society under the overbearing influence of Islamic culture, Guru Granth Sahib does not accept the thesis of Manu and Islam that woman is the source of all evil. In Asa di Var it is said that man takes birth from a woman, marries a woman and then expands his progeny through a woman. Man expands the circle of his relatives through women and through women he begets his successors. Man marries another woman when his wife dies, and woman is the basis of man's family. Kings, heroes, gurus, saints, deities, are all born of women, then why should man condemn women

as a class. Only such people are honoured in God's court that respect women.³⁶ Gurbani goes to the extent of honouring the womanhood by calling a divine-devoted soul as the female-spouse of the Supreme Soul, instances of which can be seen all over the Sikh scripture.

Casteism and untouchability are the other social evils of the Indian society that Guru Granth Sahib seeks to rectify. The Sikh creed had given a death blow to these social evils by according people of all castes, creeds classes and sexes equal rights to visit and pray in its shrines (gurawaras), and to join its community and religious congregations (sangats) and community meals (langar). It is the hallmark of equality for all humankind. The essence of gurbani is that all humankind is the offspring of only one God, who also abides in them all, for which reason all human beings are equal.³⁷ It is further held that human beings enjoy good fortunes or suffer woes only according to God's hukam determined by their good or bad deeds (karam).³⁸ God is the judge, and his hukam is based only on the quality of one's karams and not one's caste, creed or class.³⁹ Thus one must not feel proud of one's high caste or high office or great riches, because these are of no help in the court of God where every soul will be judged by his deeds only. Therefore, humans too should judge other humans only from their deeds and not on the basis of their class, creed or caste. "ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੁਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ"⁴⁰

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism shows the path in the gurbani, "What have I to do with the high caste people? You may always find me amongst the meanest, the lowest of the low castes."⁴¹ Bhai Gurdas had testified in his Vars, "Guru Nanak had abolished the differences between the four castes."⁴² Gurbani propounds, "Vain is the pride of caste and vain the pride of high station, because only the Lord alone gives the real eminence to all."⁴³ "Caste by birth carries no significance as it is fixed by the Supreme Being. A man's caste

and class are determined by the deeds he performs.”⁴⁴ “In God’s kingdom all are comrades, and all alike consider Him as their friend and benefactor.”⁴⁵ And Guru Nanak promises, “He who serves the high caste people deserves all praise; but, for the person who goes into the humbler castes for service, I would make shoes of my own skin.”⁴⁶

In the field of political ethics, gurbani enshrined in *Guru Granth Sahib* not only carries very strong views regarding the low morality of the contemporary rulers and their functionaries but also enumerates many virtues a good ruler should emulate. We can see from many references in the gurbani that most foreign rulers and their foreign and native officials were totally unconcerned about the welfare of the people, were despotic, cruel, corrupt and unjust.⁴⁷ Describing the tyranny of the ruling class, gurbani laments, “Rulers have become beasts of prey and their officers hounds. They do not allow the people to rest in peace. Their subordinates bleed the people, and like dogs prey on the blood and marrow of the poor. They forget that at the time of judgement they will be disgraced and punished.”⁴⁸ “Nobody takes pity on the suffering of others. Nobody resists from receiving graft. Rulers do not administer justice unless their palms are greased. You cannot persuade anybody just by invoking God’s name.”⁴⁹ Kazis would make show of religiosity but would not impart justice without bribery and Pandits were fleecing the miserable and friendless people in the name of religion.

Gurbani postulates that an ideal State does not become power-intoxicated, but is rather God fearing and affords protection to its subjects and their religion. It reminds the rulers that despite their high offices, official glory, and authoritative dominance over their subjects, they will go to the God’s court like everyone else and shall be judged like everyone else, only on the basis of goodness or baseness

of their deeds.⁵⁰ Those in high offices must also remember that their offices and glory is never long lasting and must one day come to an end, for which reason, they must remember the fate of immoral rulers bereft of their offices.⁵¹ Only by practising virtuosity can rulers ensure continuing in their offices.⁵²

Guru Granth Sahib asserts that only a virtuous ruler would have a long tenure. Such a ruler would not be self-willed and headstrong, but would rule by consensus. Gurbani commends the Panchayati Raj system for a good ruler. Panchayati Raj system, so prevalent in Indian polity since ages and the oldest example of democracy practised in the world, has the basis in virtuosity, equality, justice, tolerance and universal brotherhood, the essence of gurbani.⁵³ It is the duty of the rulers to practice and protect virtuosity.⁵⁴ People respect and love the rulers who rule by winning the hearts of the people rather on the strength of power and authority, “ਮਨਿ ਜੀਭੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ”⁵⁵ A person whom the people do not love or respect has no right to be the ruler, “ਕਿਆ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ਸਲਾਮ ਵਿਹੁਣਾ”⁵⁶ A despotic and inhuman ruler ultimately suffers brutal fate at the hands of the same people whom he humiliates and harms.⁵⁷ Freedom,⁵⁸ equality⁵⁹ and justice⁶⁰ are considered as the most important features of an ethical political system.

As for religious ethics it, understandably, finds the maximum attention in Guru Granth Sahib. Gurbani boldly describes the socio-religious degeneration of the times of the Gurus. Similar degeneration in the Hindu and Muslim societies is picturesquely described by the third Guru Amardas in his bani preserved in Guru Granth: “When a Hindu comes to join the Hindu fold, they recite mantras and put the cotton thread round his neck ceremoniously. But once the investiture is over, and he commits evil deeds, of what avail would be his washings and ablutions? Similarly, when a Muslim praises his own creed without believing in the great Prophet, how will he

find any place in paradise? Very few follow the path indicated by Him. None will enter paradise without good deeds. ... People forget that only those who remember God in this world will be recognised by Him hereafter. For the rest, all boast of being a Hindu or Muslim is in vain. All should remember that all have to render account at His door, and without righteous deeds none will get salvation.⁶¹

The religious ethics of Guru Granth Sahib requires the religious to be true and faithful to the tenets of their respective faiths, and condemns blind and fanatic emphasis on formalism and ritualism of all kinds.⁶² The priests are admonished not to exploit ignorant people in the name of religion but to spread the true message of their respective creeds by setting worthy examples.⁶³ The ideal religion, according to Gurbani, is the one that relies more on ethical conduct than on theoretical truth and helps to establish a society and state grounded in ethics.⁶⁴

Gurbani roundly condemns religious formalism and appearances because these are employed by the religious charlatons to swindle the innocent devotees. It is asserted that practicing religion without understanding is nothing less than frittering away your valuable life.⁶⁵ Any type of religious practices besides worshiping, remembering, reciting or singing the name or praise of God is just contemptible.⁶⁶ Practising blind formalism cannot remove superstitions and ignorance.⁶⁷ Bare formalism and ritualism cannot help one realise God and mukti.⁶⁸

The nature of the ethics of Guru Granth Sahib is altruistic and all encompassing, covering all the aspects of human life, personal, social, political and religious. In short, it believes that an ethical man, society, state or religion should consider all humanity a single united human brotherhood, being the children of the same singular God, and should abhor all discrimination on the basis of creed, caste, class

or sex. None should be proud of his class, creed or caste, because before God these qualities carry no meaning and God dispenses happiness, prosperity, woes, mukhti or *avagaon* on the basis of one's deeds only. And exploiting religious charlatons, and repressive rulers and bureaucrats would meet the end deserved by their sinful deeds. Only ethical life will deserve the Grace of God, and inculcating the disposition of bhagti, it will open the doors to mukhti for the human soul.

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Truth as the Supreme Reality in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

—Dr. Gurnam Kaur

1. The Origin, Meaning and Definition of Truth

Sach is the Punjabi form of the Sanskrit word *sat*, which is a noun and its root in Sanskrit language is *asi*. The meanings which the word implies are: being, existing, occurring, happening, being present etc.¹ Its adjective is *satya* (सत्य). In Hindu Dharam Kosh. *Satya* has been held as that which remains the same in the three divisions of time i.e. past, present and future.

Sach is translated as Truth in English language. What is Truth? In answer to this question it is held by a scholar that it can be answered only, "if we allow ourselves two metaphysical assumptions first, that there are states or affairs, some of which occur or obtain and some of which do not occur or obtain, and second that there are attributes or properties, some of which are exemplified or instantiated and some of which are not exemplified or instantiated."² The "Propositions" have been considered by the same scholar as a subspecies of states of affairs. The propositions are those states of affairs, namely, which are necessarily such that either they always obtain or they never obtain."³ It is observed that a proposition, might be said 'is true, if and only if it obtains. And it is false if and only if it does not obtain'.⁴ So 'Truth' is the property of a proposition. Every proposition is such that either it is True or False and no

proposition can have both the properties of true and false. According to Bertrand Russell "Truth is a property of beliefs, and derivatively of sentences which express belief. Truth consists in a certain relation between a belief and one or more facts other than the belief. When this relation is absent, the belief is false".⁵ It is further observed that whether some one's belief is, "true depends upon a fact which may remain outside his experience."⁶ As far as a sentence is concerned, "the significance consists in the description of the fact, which if it exists, will make the sentence "true".⁷ If the description of the sentence describes a fact, it is 'true', if it does not describe a fact, it is false. "Oxford Advanced Learners" Dictionary defines it as that which is in accordance or agreement with fact"⁸, while further elaborating it is told that, "Truth is Existential Contest, is a value-oriented concept it is not merely epistemic. It is the revelation of the being of the individual, It uncovers all the marks (which one often wears) and discloses the authentic possibilities of the individual. Existential truth does not emerge out of a theoretical enquiry and can not be grasped thematically, it is related to Praxis. To know the truth is to be it. Dynamism of man's being defies final results, therefore truth is never finished, it is in transition."⁹

There are mainly three theories of Truth which are known as: Correspondence Theory of Truth, Pragmatic Theory' of Truth and Coherence Theory of Truth. We will discuss them briefly one by one,

Correspondence Theory of Truth

According to this theory, a proposition judged or a judgement, is true if there is a fact corresponding to it, false if not. On the surface level, common sense seems to support Correspondence Theory of Truth. According to a scholar, "we say that a man's belief is correct if it agrees, or conforms or accords or corresponds with the facts, all the above phrases suggesting that Truth is (a) a relation of some

kind between what a man judges, on the one hand, and the facts of the case, on the other : and (b) a relation of a special sort, which we try to indicate by using names such as 'agree' correspond etc."¹⁰

Pragmatic Criterion of Truth

According to this theory we perceive the world according to the human needs and interests. The value of a theory lies in the factor whether it conforms to the human needs or not. It is true if and only if it conforms to human needs. If not, then it is false. According to Schiller, "the forms and connections of the world of our experience are not to be regarded as imposed upon us from without, either by a non-human system of material forces or by a super-human system of absolute and eternal ideals, but are rather to be viewed as the outcome of the enduring interests, preferences, and needs of ourselves and our ancestors."¹¹ So according to him we perceive the world according to the human needs and interests. So "we must, in short, judge the truth of a theory by the Pragmatic Criterion of its value in practical life."¹² It implies that the judgement value of a theory lies in the factor whether it conforms to the human needs or not. It is true only if it conforms to human needs. If not, then it is false.

James, Dewey and Schiller, all three of them, worked at the problem of method from different angles and have arrived at a virtual agreement. For James and Schiller both, "thought or cognition exists for the sake of action rather than as an end in itself, and for all three the truth of a judgement should be measured not by an abstract criterion such as consistency or copying of fact, but by the concrete criterion of its practical efficiency to satisfy the need by which it was generated."

The Coherence Theory of Truth

According to the coherence theory of truth, the truth of a judgement consists in its coherence within a system of a judgement."¹³

It means the 'path' is true when it coheres with the whole. The Coherence Theory of Truth forms the part of an idealist system of epistemology and of metaphysics.

According to most idealist view of this theory reality is a system completely ordered and fully intelligible..... Truth is the approximation of thought to reality. It is thought on its way home. Its measure is the distance thought has travelled, under guidance of its inner compass, towards that intelligible system which unites its inner compass, towards that intelligible system which unites its ultimate object with its ultimate end. Hence at any given time the degree of truth in our experience as a whole is the degree of system it has achieved. The degree of truth of a particular proposition is to be judged in the first instance by its coherence with experience as a whole, ultimately by its coherence with that further whole, all-comprehensive and fully articulated, in which thought can come to rest.¹⁴ It may be said that it is a relationship holding between the group of propositions in such a way that proposition cannot be false if all the other propositions of that group are true. No single proposition is independent of the others. It is held that, 'between all the several propositions there exists a mutual entailment such that any one of them is deducible from all the rest, and that no one of them could be true if any of the others were false.'¹⁵ It may be said that it is a relationship holding between the group of propositions in such a way that a proposition cannot be false if all the other propositions of that group are true. No single proposition is independent of the others.

Sach or Truth has been used in three different meanings in Sikhism: (a) as an attribute of Reality (b) secondly, as a quality of a proposition which has got the capacity for guiding the conduct, (c) Thirdly, *sach* or Truth has been referred to as a moral "virtue".

So Truth is mainly concerned with three areas: ontological-with the nature of Reality, epistemological as a theory of truth or knowledge: and ethical-as a moral virtue. Here our main concern with the 'Truth' is in the meaning of Being, the Reality though we will also refer briefly to the other two aspects of *sach*.

As already mentioned Sach is the Punjabi form of the Sanskrit word *satya*, the meaning of which is "to be" or "being".¹⁶ In *Mulmantra* it is *sati* (ਸਤਿ) Interpreting "*Sati Nam*" in *Mulmantra*, the same scholar holds that the word "*sati*" here implies the non-dual *sati*. It is above *sat-asat* or *sach-jhuth* dualism and implies the meaning of "a conscious being whose form is Truth."¹⁷ Another scholar while interpreting the meaning of the words '*Sat*' and "*sachiara*" says that among interpretations done so far by the scholars of Sikhism Max Arthur Macauliffe's seems more authentic.¹⁸ According to him, the interpretation of *Mulmantra* conveys the meaning of True as 'being' or eternal existence.¹⁹ After giving the views of the various Sikh scholars like Gopal Singh, Sohan Singh, Sodhi Teja Singh etc. he further observes that, "the term Sat here has the same meaning which *Satya* has in *Bhagvat Purana* where the opening verse is "an adoration of the ultimate truth (*Parama Satya*). The essential (*Savrupa*) definitive nature of God is said to be truth (*satya*)."²⁰ The interpretation done by this scholar seems to be most agreeable. This finds support from *Brahma Sutra* where Sat has been taken for being. In *Vedanta* system, the qualities of Brahman, the ultimate Reality are said to be *Sat-cit-anand* that is being, conscious and bliss. In the *Chhandoga Upanishad*, it is said that "all creatures have their root in the True, they dwell in the True, they rest in the True."²¹ And this "True is the highest being."²² In Sikhism the Absolute has been described as *Sati-Naam Karta Purkha* which differentiates it from the traditional Indian concept. It indicates dynamism and creativeness in the concept of Reality as viewed in Sikhism.

Satnam here means that the essential definite nature of God is Truth. According to one scholar, "in Sikhism the Absolute has been conceived as dynamic and viewed functionally"²³. He is of the opinion that *Sat* is not enough to convey this dynamic creativity, "it is perhaps due to this inability of mere *sat* as truth to convey this dynamic creativity that Guru Nanak prefers to use "satnam karta purkh" We can say that "satnam karta purakh" is indicative of the very perfection of existence "Truth" (*sat*) has been placed before seeker "the Sikh" as an ideal to be obtained during his life time. Ultimately, the seeker is to merge into the "Truth" the Ultimate Being". His ultimate goal of life is to be *sachiar*, to be like "Him".

Sach has also been described as having a capacity to guide the conduct of the seeker. According to Guru Nanak, *sach* is the panacea for the ills which afflict man. It washes the mind clean of all the sins.²⁴ *Sach* as a moral virtue is realized when the seeker disciplines the basic interests and cultivates the angelic aspect of his personality under the guidance of the Guru.²⁵

Gurvak helps in realizing the Truth It is a guide, the pure which illumines all with its Light. Through its light the Reality is shown to man.²⁶ "Such a man is termed as *sacha* (*sachiara* also), the true-one. who is imbued with the Highest Truth, the ultimate Reality. In him God's light becomes manifest which leads to the above mentioned results."²⁷

We can say. in the light of the above discussion about *sach* and its attainment that to be *sachiar* means to realize the unity' of the self with the *sach* or the Absolute. The seeker is to attain this unity not only through reflection, contemplation and intuition but through his actions also. He has to discipline his life in the way of the Gurus which is called *gurmat jugati* also, As averred by a scholar, "the ideal of all this discipline is to realize the pervasiveness

of universal spirit in all and this is to be realized not only through gradual expansion of consciousness, but it is also to be effectively translated in the actions of the self."²⁸ It is through this that the concept of the Absolute as *sati nam karta purakhu*, the dynamic and creative aspect of Reality, as put forth by Guru Nanak can be understood. That is why the idea of Truth according to Sikhism cannot be attained in seclusion. It is to be attained through the participation in social life. Seclusion leads to escapism from the social responsibilities. But in Sikhism, the sachiara becomes more conscious of his social responsibilities and utilizes his knowledge for the improvement of the human society."²⁹

According to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Reality God reveals Himself through His *qudrat* and His *hukam*. The concept of *qudrat* implies the whole existence from the material level to the level of most rational and conscious being. Hukam means the casual relationship, the orderliness which makes the universe a cosmos. Karta Purakh is the originator of this world and the ground of this whole manifestation According to Guru Nanak, God creates nature and then reflects on His own creation. He also sustains it. He Himself knows the why of it. He is ingrained in everybody as shabad.³⁰ So according to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Reality is immanent in nature and in every practice of creation there is the light of the Reality and this element increases as the creation moves from the lower level to the higher level. In the whole nature of the manifestation, man is the highest kind of manifestation because he has got the capacity to realize the Reality. According to the Sikh point of view, all creation and expansion done by the Reality is True, The Creator and the creation both are True, So are all the parts of a creative whole.³⁰ It implies that all is Truth. There is no possibility of wrong and falsehood or evil in the Divine plan. Falsehood or evil exists only from the point

of view of finite creatures. But they also have the potentialities of transcending those weaknesses and attain the Truth, the whole.

In Sikhism *haumai* and *maya* are the wall of falsehood on the individual and cosmic plane, respectively. They give rise to many passions, like *lobh*, *moh*, *vair* and *virodh* etc, which separates man from the Reality. Haumai has been considered as basic malady but in it lies the remedy also. When man recognises the negative role of the *haumai* within him. he can remove it, with the grace of God.³¹ When it is removed, man has the knowledge of Reality and the part is merged in the Whole. According to Spinoza also, "the human mind has an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God but the passions distract and obscure an intellectual vision of the whole."³² According to Sri Guru Granth Sahib contemplation on the *shabad* unites the man with the whole. The *Sachiar* lives in the nirmal bhau only, but not in any other external fear. *Nirmal bhau* is aroused in his experience with God as wonderful Lord, *Waheguru*. When he views the world as the expression of the One Ultimate Being and as the creation of *sat* out of *sat*, he views everything as a part of the whole.

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15. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
16. Ibid., p. 152.
17. Bhai Vir Singh, *Santhya Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (Vol.1, Amritsar. Khalsa Samachar, Hall Bazar, November 1961) p.38.
18. Ibid., p.12.
19. Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs* (Punjabi University, Patiala) p.40.
20. Ibid., p.41.

“But from what he quotes for comparison, namely an inscription from a Greek temple “ I am all that was and is and will be”. we may infer that perhaps the alternative meaning in his mind was in terms of “being or eternal existence”

21. Ibid., p.42.
22. Radhakrishnan S, *Brahma Sutra*, p.90.
23. Max Muller, *The Upanishads* (Vol. I), P.100.
24. Ibid., p.101.
25. Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, op.cit., p.5.
26. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. M.1. p.468.

Sach Sabhna hoi daru pap kadhai dhoe

ਸਚ ਸਭਨਾ ਹੋਇ ਦਾਰੂ ਪਾਪ ਕਢੈ ਧੋਇ ॥

27. Ibid., M.1., p.463.
bahilari gur apane diohari sad var
tin manas te devate kie karat na lagi var
28. Ibid., p.687.
sansaru rogi nam daru mailu lagai sach bina.
gur vaku nirmalu sada chananu nit sachu tirathu majana
29. Ibid., M.1, p.1112.
sachu gharu khoji lahe sacha gur thano
30. Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, p.46.
31. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, M.5, p.269.
mithia tan nahi parupkara
mithia basu let bikara
and
Brahamugiani parupkar Umaha
32. Ibid M.5, p. 1073.
ape kudrati kare vichara...
antri bahari sabh kichhu janai ape hi api patija he
and
Ibid., M.1.
ihu jagu sache ki hai kothri sache ka vich vasu.
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haumai diragh rogu hai daru bhi isu mahe
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Sri Guru Granth Sahib : A Juristic Person

—Dr. Kashmir Singh

Facts of the Case

A religious institution was established in village Bilaspur, of the erstwhile princely state of Patiala and the disputed land measuring about 115 bighas was attached to it. This property was meant for providing food and shelter to the travellers. But the ancestors of the respondents (S N Dass and others) failed to perform their duty. In the settlement (Jamabandi) of 1904, they got this land transferred to their own names and were referred to as owners in possession of this land.

Royal Orders

Farman-e-Shahi of the ruler of Patiala State, issued in April 1921, directed the revenue authority that till Deori Mulla approves mahant's appointment, no property of Muafi received by a mahant should be entered in his name in revenue papers. Further, the land which pertains to any Dera should not be considered as the property of any mahant, nor the same should be shown in the revenue papers as the property of the mahant, but it should be entered as belonging to the Dera under the management of the Mahant and that the Mahants shall not be entitled to sell or mortgage the land of the Dera.

At the instance of some residents of the village the Revenue Officer, after a detailed enquiry, ordered in 1928, that mutation entries

concerning this land be made in the name of "Guru Granth Sahib banajman Dharamshala Deh", by deleting the names of ancestors of the respondents from the column of ownership of the land. No objection was filed against this entry by anyone for about 45 years. The property continued in the possession of the respondents to whom it was given in trust for a specified purpose though they did not perform their obligation. They could neither claim any right over the property nor they could usurp it because they were only the trustees.

Case before Sikh Gurdwaras Tribunal

On the re-organization of States in 1956, Patiala State was merged into Punjab. Fifty-six Sikhs moved a petition under Section 7 of the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925 to the State Government for declaration that the disputed property is a Sikh Gurdwara. Three respondents challenged the aforesaid petition under Section 8 and 10 of the Act and claimed it to be an Udasi Dera owned and managed by them as they received it from their ancestors. They also claimed to be in possession of the land attached to the Dera. They denied it to be Sikh Gurdwara.

The question was to be decided by the Sikh Gurdwaras Tribunal to which the petition was forwarded under the provision of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act. The appellant, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) entered the scene at this stage. It claimed before the Tribunal that the disputed institution is "a Sikh Gurdwara having been established by the Sikhs for their worship, wherein Guru Granth Sahib was the only object and it was the sole owner of the Gurdwara property. The SGPC questioned the locus standi of the respondents to file the objection because section 8 of the Act requires that objection could be filed either by any hereditary office-holder or by twenty or more worshippers of the religious place. Here the three respondents who had filed the objection do not claim themselves to be hereditary

office-holders of the Gurdwara. They admitted the use of the place as their residence and claimed that there was no object of worship and they neither managed it nor performed any public worship. Thus the Tribunal held that they have no locus standi under section 8, and their objection not to regard the place as Sikh Gurdwara was not tenable.

Gurdwara Sahib Dharamshala Guru Sahib became the owner of the property consisting of Gurdwara building and agricultural land measuring 115 bighas and 12 biswas.

Case before the High Court

Aggrieved by the Tribunal's order, the respondents filed appeal in the High Court. It was contended that entry in the revenue records in the name of Guru Granth Sahib was void as Guru Granth Sahib was not a juristic person. They said that Guru Granth Sahib is only a Sacred Book of the Sikhs and cannot be a juristic person. On the other hand, SGPC pleaded that Guru Granth Sahib is a juristic person and hence it can hold property and also can sue and be sued. Justice K. S. Tiwana and Justice M. M. Punchhi, who were hearing the appeal, differed on the issue, the former holding Guru Granth Sahib as a juristic person and the later holding it otherwise. On reference to a third judge, Justice Tewatia agreed with the later view not holding Guru Granth Sahib as a juristic person. After decision about juristic personality by full bench of three Judges, the matter went back to the same division bench of two Judges who differed again. Justice Tiwana held the mutations to be invalid and the respondents having no right to property, but Justice Punchhi held the mutation to be valid and the property belonged to the respondents. Justice J. B. Gupta, before whom the matter was placed to resolve the tie, concurred with Justice Punchhi, in 1986. He based his decision on the finding that Guru Granth Sahib is not juristic person and the mutation in its name was not sustainable.

Appeal before the Supreme Court

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee approached the Supreme Court in appeal. The question before the Supreme Court was of far reaching consequences and of great significance to one of the major religion's followers of this country. It was, whether the Guru Granth Sahib could be treated as a juristic person or not.

The learned Judges of the Supreme Court expressed their opinion as follows:

“The very words “Juristic Person” connote recognition of an entity to be in law a person which otherwise it is not. In other words, it is not an individual natural person but an artificially created person which is to be recognized to be in law as such”. Som Parkesh Rekhi V. Union of India was approvingly quoted as holding that “a legal person is any entity other than a human being to which the law attributes personality”.

The Court held, “Each religion highlights love, compassion, tolerance, sacrifice as a hallmark for attaining divinity. When one reaches this divine empire, he is beholden through a feeling of universal brotherhood and love which impels him to sacrifice his belongings and wealth, both for his own bliss and for its being useful to a large section of the society. This sprouts charity for public endowment. Where there is any endowment for charitable purpose it can create institutions like a church, hospital, Gurdwara, etc... when the donor endows for an idol, or for a mosque or for any institution, it necessitates the creation of a juristic person.”

The Supreme Court observed, “there is a direct ruling of this court on the crucial point. In Pritam Dass Mahant V. SGPC, this court held that central body of worship in a Gurdwara is Guru Granth Sahib the holy book, which is a juristic entity. It was held that the sine

qua non for an institution being a Sikh Gurdwara is that there should be established Guru Granth Sahib and worship of the same by the congregation and Nishan Sahib. There may be other rooms of the institution meant for other purpose, but the crucial test is the existence of Guru Granth Sahib and the worship thereof by the congregation and Nishan Sahib”.

Arguments of the Respondents

The respondents emphasized that Guru Granth Sahib is not a juristic person. The reasons advanced by them were (a) the decisions of the courts recognized an idol to be a juristic person. Guru Granth Sahib, a Sacred Book, can neither be equated with an idol nor does Sikhism believe in idol worship. Further, conferring legal personality on Guru Granth Sahib will amount to idolatry practice. It will be contradictory to Sikh principles, which do not believe in idolatry; hence, Guru Granth Sahib cannot be a juristic person, (b) Guru Granth Sahib is a sacred book like the Bible, Geeta and Quran. None of these including Guru Granth Sahib is a juristic person, (c) there could not be two juristic persons in one place, viz. Gurdwara is already held to be a juristic person, so legal personality cannot be conferred on Guru Granth Sahib, (d) if Guru Granth Sahib is held to be a juristic person, every copy of it will have to be considered as such and (e) as no manager has been appointed in the contentious endowment as such, Guru Granth Sahib in this case could not be a juristic person.

All these arguments of the respondents were accepted by the High Court while holding Guru Granth Sahib not to be a juristic person. To recapitulate, there was a difference of opinion between the two judges of the division Bench and the third judge, to whom matter was referred, agreed with one of the differing judges to hold Guru Granth Sahib not be a juristic person.

Decision of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of India followed the appeal of the SGPC and held that the High Court committed a serious mistake of law in holding like that. The apex Court set aside the judgement of the High Court. It demolished all arguments accepted by the High Court one by one as follows:

(a) The SC has been quite categorical while rebutting the argument of the respondents. It said, "This submission in our view is based on a misconception. It is necessary for Guru Granth Sahib to be declared to as such a juristic person that it should be equated with an idol. When belief and faith of different religions are different, there is no question of equating with one with the other. If Guru Granth Sahib by itself could stand the test of its being declared as such, it can be declared to be so. The court further observed: The last living Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, expressed in no uncertain terms that henceforth there would not be any living Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib would be vibrating Guru. He declared, "Henceforth it would be your Guru from which you will get all your guidance and answer." It is with this faith that it is worshipped like a living Guru. It is with this faith and conviction, when it is installed in any Gurdwara, it becomes a sacred place of worship. Sacredness of Gurdwara is (there) only because of placement of Guru Granth Sahib in it. This reverential recognition of Guru Granth Sahib also opens the hearts of its followers to pour their money and wealth for it. In this background, and on overall considerations, we have no hesitation to hold that Guru Granth Sahib is a "Juristic Person". It cannot be equated with an 'idol' as idol worship is contrary to Sikhism. As a concept or a vision for obeisance, the two religions are different. Yet, for its legal recognition as a juristic person, the followers of both the religions given them, respectively, the same reverential value. Thus, Guru Granth Sahib

has all the qualities to be recognised as such. Holding otherwise would mean giving too restrictive meaning to a 'juristic person,' and that would erase the very jurisprudence, which gave birth to it. The SC noted that Sikhism does not believe in idolatry. "When the Tenth Guru declared that after him, the Guru Granth Sahib would be the Guru, that does not amount to idolatry."

(b) The second submission of the respondents also, the court said, "has no merit. Though it is true that Guru Granth Sahib is a sacred book like others but it cannot be equated with these other sacred books in that sense. Guru Granth Sahib is revered in Gurdwara like a Guru, which projects a different perception. It is the very heart and spirit of Gurdwara. The reverence of Guru Granth Sahib on the one hand and other sacred books on the other is based on different conceptual faith, belief and application.

(c) The difficulty of having two juristic persons, Gurdwara and Guru Granth Sahib, if the later is recognised as such, in one place was termed by the SC as a misconceived notion. They are no two "Juristic Persons" at all. In fact, both are so interwoven that they cannot be separated. The installation of Guru Granth Sahib is the nucleus of any Gurdwara. If there is not Guru Granth Sahib in a Gurdwara, it cannot be termed as a Gurdwara. When one refers a building to be a Gurdwara, he refers it so only because Guru Granth Sahib is installed therein. Even if one holds a Gurdwara to be juristic person, it is because it hold the Guru Granth Sahib. So, there does not exist two separate juristic persons, they are one integrated whole.

(d) The reason that if Guru Granth Sahib is a "Juristic Person" then every copy of it will be so, in the considered opinion of the Supreme Court, is based on an erroneous approach. On this reasoning, it could be argued that every idol at private places, or carrying it with oneself each would become a "Juristic Person". This is a

misconception. An 'idol' becomes a juristic person only when it is consecrated and installed at a public place for the public at large. Every 'idol' is not a juristic person. So, every Guru Granth Sahib cannot be juristic person unless it takes a juristic role through its installation in a Gurdwara or at such other recognized place.

(e) The Supreme Court said that the High Court erred in holding that the endowment is void as there could be no juristic person without appointment of a manager. The highest court of the land held that no endowment or juristic person depends on the appointment of a manager. It may be proper or advisable to appoint such a manager while making any endowment but in its absence, it may be done either by trustees or courts in accordance with law. Mere absence of a manager does not negate the existence of a juristic person.... Once endowment is made, it is final and irrevocable. It is the onerous duty of the person entrusted with such endowment, to carry out the objectives of this entrustment. They may appoint a manager in the absence of any indication in the trust or get it appointed through the court. So, if entrustment is to any juristic person the mere absence of a manager would not negate the existence of a juristic person.

The Supreme Court concluded that there is no strength in the reasoning of the High Court in recording a finding that Guru Granth Sahib is not a "Juristic Person". The finding of the High Court is not sustainable both in fact and law. The Supreme Court, while allowing the appeal, observed that the High Court committed a serious mistake of law in holding that Guru Granth Sahib was not a juristic person and in allowing the claim over this property in favour of the respondents. The Hon'ble judges of the Supreme Court said, "We unhesitatingly hold Guru Granth Sahib to be a "Juristic Person".

Impact of the Judgement

This is a landmark and historic judgement of far-reaching consequences and great significance. Huge properties worth crores

of rupees exist in the name of Guru Granth Sahib, not being a juristic person, could not be deemed to hold property and can sue for recovery of property belonging to Guru Granth Sahib in the wrongful people who were taking the undue benefit of the legal lacunae.

Apprehension of Some Sikhs

Certain apprehensions are expressed by some Sikhs as to the impact of this judgement. These are:

- (a) Guru Granth Sahib is equated with Hindu idol or deity.
- (b) The suits and claims will be filed against every copy of Guru Granth Sahib anywhere and everywhere.
- (c) The holy Sikh scripture will be subjected to the jurisdiction of worldly courts and the holy name of the existing Sikh Guru will be irreverently dragged before the courts just like ordinary property holders.

The first two objections were raised by the respondents before the Supreme Court. As noted earlier the Court itself effectively answered both of these, in the words of the Supreme Court.

“It is not necessary for Guru Granth Sahib to be declared as a juristic person that it should be equated with an idol. When faith and belief of two different religions are different, there is no question of equating one with another”. It was held that Guru Granth Sahib cannot be equated with sacred books of other religions as the reverence of Guru Granth Sahib is based on different conceptual faith, belief and application in comparison to other sacred books. It is the living and eternal Guru of Sikhs.

As to the second objection, the Court has very rightly said that every Guru Granth Sahib cannot be a juristic person unless it takes juristic role through its installation in a Gurdwara. So this objection is also misconceived.

There is a slight weight in the last objection. But such sentiments cannot be allowed to come in the way of recovering huge properties endowed by the devotees to the eternal Guru. The people who have encroached upon such properties are unnecessarily highlighting this objection for their selfish interest. It may be mentioned that the name of Guru Granth Sahib was taken to the courts even before Guru Granth Sahib was declared as juristic person. The case of Piara Singh V. Sri Guru Granth Sahib may be referred to in this regard.

Conclusion

There should not be any inhibition in recovering the Guru's property by filing suits in the name of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The property so recovered and income therefrom should be used for the noble causes to alleviate the suffering of the mankind. It can be said that the judgement is quite satisfactory and encouraging. It acknowledges the special position and status of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. No adverse impact is likely to be caused to the tenets of Sikh religion by the declaration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as a juristic person. Besides, the Supreme Court of India has highlighted various Sikh principles in right perspective.

Socio-Religious Context of truth as depicted in Guru Granth Sahib

—Dr. Jasbir Singh Sabar

A study of Socio-Religious Context of Truth reveals that Sri Guru Granth Sahib is not merely a knowledge of words indeed it is an ocean of such human values which can completely transform the human being to upward. Moreover, the way of life that emerged in this Holy Scripture is not meant for any specific community or clan rather it is dedicated to whole mankind. In fact Guru Granth Sahib contains numerous valuable discourses following which one can annihilate all his avarices (lalach) and learn to live a balanced life. Today everybody is keenly in search of a universally accepted preceptors or role model who could provide enlightenment and bliss to human life by helping to set it on the path of spiritual upliftment. I am sure, if we study Guru Granth Sahib objectively, we will find that none else can play this role better than Guru Granth Sahib, which shall ever remain a reforming force and will solve all the problems and will also prove a matrix between God and human soul. It is because its teachings are based on word of truth, to know the truth and to lead the life of truthful living. In fact this concept of truth has been given more importance in Guru Granth Sahib as it starts by defining the name of true God as true name (satinamu). Again after Mul Mantra the word true has been repeated four times as:

Adi sachu Jugadi Sachu.

Hai bhee Sachu Nanak Hosi bhee Sachu.

At the end of Guru Granth Sahib at page No. 1429 Guru Arjan Dev says that “Guru Granth Sahib is like a salver (ਸਾਲ), wherein are placed three things, i.e. Truth (ਸਚ) Contentment (ਸੰਤੋਖ) Reflection (ਵਿਚਾਰ). Socio-Religious Context of these three cardinal principles for the upliftment of humanity is explored in this paper. It is an attempt to formulate the social structure as depicted in Guru Granth Sahib and its ontological doctrines serving the whole mankind.

In fact the problem of “Socio-Religious thought generally rests on the kind of social reality and the relationship envisaged between religion and society in a particular time and clime. The relationship between the truths is not only fundamental to the nature of society. Religion invokes a distinction between the sacred and the secular, applies this distinction to determine the status of the empirical world, and offers prescriptions for social order, individual behaviour and collective actions. It also affirms that life’s socialite forms and expressions should be infused with such values based on Truth leading to truthful living. This implicitly gives expression to the spiritual affinity of the manifest world with the supreme reality and to the relationship between the human ideal and its present reality. However different religious traditions distinguish themselves from one another as regarding their views on this fundamental relationship and their respective vision on the social structure as distinct from the present social reality.

Keeping in view the significance of Socio-Religious Context of Truth as enunciated in Guru Granth Sahib and its role in actualizing that spirituality in societal relations in order to build a healthy new world, the nature of truth and its application in human life require to be understood first.

All religions of the world emphasize quest of knowing the Truth. There are two type of truth. One is based on science and second on spiritualism The quest of the Truth of science is of external reality

and that of religion and spiritualism is the Truth of inner reality, but both interact with each other. Scientific truths and ethical truths are complementary because different aspects of reality of matter and mind, body and soul, are complementary. Any disregard of the ethical truths can only lead to depersonalization and dehumanization of life. To pursue Truth in all its varied aspects, of which the moral or ethical is concerned is certainly most important, is the highest value and obligation and is the need of the human society of today. In fact pursuit of Truth is the supreme intrinsic value which brings about an understanding of the relationship between matter and energy, energy and emotion, emotion and thought and thought and consciousness. This is the spiritual dimension of Truth.

Truthfulness in one's character is another significant aspect of the intrinsic human value of Truth which encompasses numerous instrumental values such as objectivity, accuracy, sincerity, honesty, veracity, integrity, discipline, tenacity of purpose, determination, patience, fearlessness, dedication, selflessness, detachment, purity of conduct, humility, inoffensiveness, cooperation, serenity of mind and purity of innerself.

When we study Guru Granth Sahib in the context of truthfulness for the development of character building of a person, we find much emphasis on a Sachiar (truthful person). According to Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Sachiar is the highest position which an individual may strive to achieve. Guru Nanak says that truthful living is higher even than truth itself.¹ The use of this word signifies that Guru Nanak's emphasis is upon transmitting secular in spiritual and thus bringing the spirituality into human action. Basically only such person has a socio-religious role and is symbol of the desired change and is symbol of reality. He or she irrespective of his or her affinity with any section of the society is a truthful person bearing high moral character.

Even the lives of illustrious founders of different faiths were living example of pursuit of truth and their unflinching dedication

to the intrinsic value of truthfulness. For them, the religion they preached was pathway to reach the Absolute Truth (God) and God-realization. It was a transforming force to be pure, unselfish, truthful and perfect observance of truth.

Actually truthfulness is a permanent value among others which creates superior strength of one's will to perceive the Absolute Truth and presence of God within all things, even within the states of misery, disease, strife and want.² Abstention from falsehood is truthfulness in thought, word and action. There is no higher virtue than truthfulness which is extolled by all religions. Contrary to it, falsehood is universally condemned.³ To live in falsehood is deemed to be worse than death. That is why Guru Granth Sahib advocates to speak only truth.⁴ Truthfulness, fearlessness, righteousness, honesty, integrity and purity of character go together as best acquisition of man, because truth knows no boundaries as it is same for all. Says Gurbani that only through truthful living one can achieve his/her goal and falsehood cannot be helpful.⁵ That is why the Gurbani admonished that one lowers himself to the level of a devil when he runs to acquire material wealth. He discards off the values of morality, ethics and righteousness and is ever engrossed in amassing wealth. The fact on the other hand, remains that this wealth will not go with a person beyond this perishable life. What then is the use of doing all this? It is better if a person must pay serious attention to the deeds he/she does and should lead truthful life.⁶ Even Guru Nanak says that wealth is to be treated as sufficient means only. Excess of it is as serious a problem as is lack of it.⁷ Guru Arjun Dev Ji, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs and compiler of Sri Guru Granth Sahib reiterates the similar view point. He mentions in one of his hymns:

*Anxiety abides in the home
Wherein lies much pelf.
There where it is lacking.*

Men wonder about in search after it.

Happy is one that from either state is free.⁸

To justify and testify his view point of truth in real sense, he brought all devotees of God, irrespective of their caste, class, status in the society, together under his own patronage by including the hymns of 30 holy and saintly persons alongwith Sikh Gurus in Guru Granth. We learn from their hymns, included in Guru Granth Sahib their significant contribution for the social, moral spiritual and intellectual development of mankind by following the path of truthful living. Infact, all these truthful saintly persons contributed their role to mould, shape and improve human life in healthy outlook.

We find that the religious life of the medieval Indian people was devoid of social context. The divorce from social realities had reduced religion to set of arid beliefs and lifeless rituals. It failed to play a vital role of guiding the human life in the society. The emergence of many sects and sub-sects such as sidhas, yogis, saktas represented a phase of decadence and morbidity in the moral and social life of the people. All these sects and others expounded mutually opposed philosophical doctrines and in the din of their ideological clashes the real context of Truth got lost. People belonging to the so-called higher caste groups had an inherited faith in the superiority of their caste and this kind of complex had become the chief obstacle to mutual understanding to the natural growth of the potentialities and capabilities of man's truthful living. This caste ideology even did not allow the *sudras* and the outcastes to merge in the mainstream of the Socio-Religious life of the society. But the teachings of Guru Granth do not believe in this hierarchical division of mankind and instead have full and firm faith in the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of mankind as this is the truth. Even all kinds of penance and austerities (the commonly employed means like torture by *sidhas*, *yogis* and mendicants from different sects

including the Sufis), asceticism and celibacy which resulted from the renunciation of the world have been reflected in hymns of Guru Granth. It advocates to live a householders life in the society. In fact the contributors of Guru Granth do not merely preach their precepts, but they at the same time lived those precepts in their lives truly so as to serve as role-models for the whole mankind because their hymns included in Guru Granth serve as the ideational basis of the socio-religious structure of their vision.

In the light of above stated observations there will be no exaggeration in saying that the path revealed in Guru Granth Sahib for socio-religious context of truth is the path of truth, humility and of love. All deeds are futile and imperfect if there is a lack of truth in the doer's behaviour, conversation, and dealings, living style and attitude. Guru Granth Sahib taught us to have faith in Truth, to speak the truth and live a truthful life.

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Sri Guru Granth's Methodology in Analysing Issues : An Overview

—Dr. Balwant Singh

The definition of God is very difficult –perhaps impossible– to give a definition of God that will cover all usages of the word. Any definition whether superhuman or supernatural is inadequate. Spinoza equated God with Nature but it is not universally acceptable. Christian theologians claim that transcendent nature of God can be spoken either positively or negatively. According to main tradition of all the Eastern and Western faiths God is also immanent. The light of God's presence in human mind enables it to recognize eternal truth.

The scientific culture of today emphasizes too much on physical and material world as we see it around us.

Two separate cultures developed one in the Middle East and the other in the East, each trying to unfold the mysteries of nature. The rationalism of Plato and Aristotle had an important impact on all the religions of Middle East though Greeks could not create their own religion. The Greek philosophers had three wonderful questions which they asked, "Who we are? Where did we come from? Why we are here? The first two questions are in the domain of science but the third one is left to philosophers and theologians.

The eastern religions did not see the factual accounts of reality but expressed a mystery that even the gods could not explain adequately. The evolution of the origin of life and the universe were

left unanswered. The wonder and terror of existence were the main subjects even Vedas tried to answer and the same line of thinking was pursued by other six philosophies.

The oldest and foremost is the Vedic tradition which is the inquiry of the absolute unity of the Self. The real inquiry is the discrimination of what is eternal and what is not eternal, the renunciation of all desire to enjoy the fruit and the acquirement of tranquility, self restraint, and the other means, and the desire of final release. The complete comprehension of BRAHMA is the highest end of man.

Brahma is being devoid of any form and can not become an object of perception and does not have any attribute. Different interpretations based on the experience of rishis or the seers are given in explanation of the above dilemma. The different commentaries are based on their training and preconceived notions. Speculative theology can conceive of God as a possibility: it is religion that affirms God as fact.

The Upnishads and Samkra try to express the nature of the Ultimate in negative terms like *nirguna* (without qualities), *nirakara* (without form), *nirvesa* (without particularity) and *nirupadhika* (without limitation). The negative account is the expression of transcendence of God.

In the words of Dr. S.C. Verma, "...the knowledge of Guru Nanak seems to be as high as his realization, acquiring a new modulus, because the words themselves were given a new form and forcefully used. The path of spiritual enlightenment is planned and chalked out with a definite progression and accumulation, both the *gyan* and *bhakti* marg being coordinated. In fact, there is an unperceived perception arising from the effects that are produced, because of vitality of language and vigor of expression."

Guru Nanak combined both the positive and negative characteristics, thereby combining the transcendence and immanent features of God. Religion is not a creed or code but an insight into reality. This combination made the concept of avatars a superfluous entity and in its place substituted the concept of *sangat* thereby raising the level of human being to a higher degree. Reality is not going to change but the environment and social conditions change. By the use of *karta purakh* it became the religion of the spirit.

Religion is identified with feeling, emotion and sentiment. Religious emphasis is on the importance of consciousness but it has its mystical element. This mystical element is based on intuition and personal experience, which makes it difficult to comprehend. It is your own stage of development and experience, which brings you a different understanding. It is an independent functioning of the mind. Mind is a very complex phenomenon and most of the Sikh teachings are directed through the development of mind to comprehend a discriminatory mind. This is the main reason there is no single interpretation of Vedas or other literature available in different philosophies.

The inexhaustible positivity of God bursts through all conceptual forms.

Jap Nisan is given in the index and the nearest meaning of the word is Logos. This word signifies the Word of God and is the cogent energy of transcendence. The word Jap is not the title without any meaning but "starts with the basic conception of God as Transcendental, a structural entity, Fountainhead, supreme in excellence, Exalted and Immanent; Indwelling, All pervading and Ubiquitous." It can be correctly defined as the "Logos of Divine Manifestation". It contains the quintessence of his philosophy, reflecting his towering personality –vibrating and pulsating religion.

Religion in the east has been identified with feeling, emotion, sentiment, instinct, belief and faith. They are right what they affirm but wrong what they deny. Guru Nanak (1469-1538) tried to solve this dilemma by mixing the two –positive and negative, in his prime relation. He started with one power (combining the Nirguna and Sarguna characteristics) by defining as *ik onkar*. These are not two words as most of the traditionalists have tried to interpret. He manifests itself in Sargun as well as Nirgun. Bhai Vir Singh explains in his *Santhya Guru Granth Sahib* (pp.2-10) in greater details that by internal consistency it can not be split into two words. Modern writers and thinkers considered the problem from various angles in a conference held at Guru Nanak Dev University in 1973. The article by Pritam Singh gives exhaustive details in its article published in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, February 1979. There is no consensus in spite of so many articles by learned persons in the profession on the subject. The articles are published over a period of five years in the same Journal.

Sat Naam its name from time immemorial is SAT the ultimate reality and the reality and truth do not alter. All other names are derived and have their origin in Sat.

Karta Purukh –the creator of all life. He is the creator and creation itself, in its fullness. The creator resides in its creation. The creator needs the power to create the material. He needs to sustain its creation. The fourth and fifth Gurus have elaborated upon this concept in their Banis. Purkha also has components of “*Surt, Mat, Man, and Budh*” which come along with the spirit.

Nirbhau –the property of being free from fear. This property does not make him equal to or sharing power with any body. This property differentiates Him from His creation. He does not have any complex which others may have. People living under His fear become fearless as they acquire the same property of their creator.

Nirmair –He is free from enmity toward none. He does not have the instincts of man. He is not revengeful. Without this property you can not have *Hukam* and this frees us from superstition and any karam simply to appease Him. Accept His Will. Any action or activity toward off clamity is meaningless. This also brings fearlessness in human beings and they can do wonders to sustain their self esteem. In *Govind Vali Pothis* this word is substituted with *nirakar* and is covered in its broader aspect with *Ajuni*.

Akal Murat –His existence is free from time.

Ajuni –He does not take birth in the form of a human being and hence no need for *Avtars*. The status of avtar is given to *Sangat* in decision making process. Human beings can progress toward better human beings but can not reach the status of 'Son of God'. His power can manifest in human beings.

Swai Bhang –Is there any technology by which He can be attained? You can see him in every human being or in his creation. No matter how hard you may try to single method can work. He is self-illuminating. We need a different eye to recognize Him. Any special effort to achieve him is worthless.

Gur Prasad –Guru consists of two words GU that means ignorance, and Ra means all light. It is HIS grace by which He can be attained. Grace is important than effort but initiative is essential to search HIM. The whole experience becomes profoundly satisfying where darkness turns into light, sadness into joy, despair into assurance.

Jap –Meditate on these properties, contemplate on any of these characteristics individually or combination of any set. It is the potential system of Dharma. It is a plan to train and culture your mind. This is not to be treated as a mantra in the classical sense. The process

of reflection brings blessed moments. It strengthens the faith. This brings new experience leading to new discoveries.

Aad Sach Jugad Sach Haibhi Sach Nanak Hosi Bhi Sach—He is above causality, free from time and space dimension. This solves the problem of the time when there was nothing in this universe. In all time periods He pervades.

Guru Nanak had first defined his concepts and tried to explain through his Bani its manifestations and social meaning of the terms used. He uses at times the same terminology but gives them different meanings. In order to give his ideas a practical shape, he designed institutions and instruments which are suitable to attain the desired goal. The congregations are held in a *Gurdwara* where *His Name* is discussed or sung according to instructions. Bani is an instrument to affect human mind and as a consequence the change in character.

SHABAD SURAT KAR KIRTAN SATSANG VILOEE

In reviewing some Sikh writings, Niki Gurinder Singh remarks, “Guru Nanak genius lies in palpably conceiving the totally Transcendent Reality in a plurality of images that incorporate both male and female dimensions. What is more disturbing about the translators, attempt to insert Guru Nanak into the Hindu tradition...Guru Nanak did not wish to associate himself with any particular school of thought; he was individual and independent of current philosophies and assertions.”

Nam Simran as an Interfaith Unifier

—Dr. S.S. Dhanoa

Sri Guru Granth Sahib mainly compiled by the 5th Guru Nanak in 1604 CE was given finishing touches by adding gurbani of the 9th Guru Nanak by the 10th Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib opens with the numeral one as the first word. The use of numeral one in place of a linguistic word underlines and certifies that the reality beyond any dispute or confusion is one and one alone.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib affirms the truth and teaching of the earlier divine revelations. It makes Sri Guru Granth Sahib a unique interfaith scripture in the modern world. However, this is true for the theistic religions. Guru Nanak can not see any thing other than the one Supreme Being as the being of all beings and the cause of all causes. Nothing can exist outside the One. The one that is transcendent is also immanent in environment, in nature, and in all human beings. The purpose of the human life is to make this indwelling God manifest in one's self.

The human body has come to thy hand. This is the chance to meet the Lord of the world—other affairs are no avail to thee. Joining the society of saints contemplate over the Name alone. (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.378)

He/She who by the Guru's grace obtains the Lord's name. Only his/her coming into the world is approved by the Lord, O' Nanak. (Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.1145)

The fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, scrutinised the available writings of both Hindu Saints and Muslim Faqirs and he approved from among these writings for inclusion in the Adi Granth being compiled by him, the writings of Hindu and Muslim subscribers of theistic devotionism or Nirguna Bhakti. Despite a variety of authors, Guru Granth Sahib has a consistent and catholic spiritual world view. It provides an express free way for reaching the goal of the human existence which is the objective of all the theistic religions. The criteria for selection of contributors to the Guru Granth Sahib seems to be the success in achieving, the common human goal of awakening the indwelling Divine in their personalities through the spiritual path of the religious tradition adopted by them. It is the Sufist Islam of Sheikh Farid and the Hindu Sant tradition of devotees like Namdev, Ravidas and Kabir.

The divine name or 'Nam' as gurbani describes is the central theme of the Guru Granth Sahib. The same name is invoked by Sheikh Farid, Kabir and Guru Nanak. One often comes across references in the Janamsakhis of Guru Nanak that those who got influenced by him became bearers of the divine name or '*Nam dharik*'. The name is bestowed on a human being by true guru through his grace. The bounty of the Guru's grace is available to the entire humanity regardless of their race, caste, creed, colour, sex or religion provided they are able to mould their lives according to the will of the Lord in the light of the Word of the Guru. They have to be like the lotus flower in water which remains unaffected by water or like the water fowl that swims against the current without permitting its feathers getting wet. The guru's word has to be enshrined in one's mind. Guru Nanak had described his path and belief in '*Sidh Gosht*'.

*As a lotus flower remains unaffected in water as also
a duck swims against the stream's current and becomes*

not wet so with fixed intent on the Guru's word and uttering the name O, Nanak the dreadful world ocean is crossed.... Through the Name's support O Nanak this mercurial mind sits in its true home and enshrines love for the true Lord and then the creator of Himself unites one is His Union. (Ibid., p.938)

The ideal of union with the Divine like the drop of water joining the ocean of water is accepted among the Sufis in Islam and the Hindu theistic devotees. Both the traditions prescribe asceticism with severe austerities and penances under the guidance of the true guru. The orthodox Sunni Islam interprets Quran in a manner where God remains always transcendent. The presence of indwelling divine is denied. The Hindu Sant and the Muslim Sufi tradition find human infirmities such as lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and his bonds with his kith and kin or belongings as great impediments in the way of achievement of spiritual goal of a human being. According to them only those can reach the highest, who turned their face against the world. It is Guru Nanak who said that on meeting the Satguru, the way to the spiritual goal is made known and while living in society enjoying the company of one's dear and near, the union with the Supreme Being is achieved.

The pithy old sayings about Guru Nanak go to confirm the view that the path shown by him was for the householders who earned their living and participated fully in the day to day affairs of the world around them. Guru Nanak desired his followers to earn their livelihood with the name of the Lord on their lips and share with others in society what they earned for themselves. "*Kirit Karo, Nam Japo te Wand Chhako*" or as they say "Guru Nanak's way is a ship which takes one across the ocean of existence". The name of Waheguru is a ship. Whoever sits in this ship is successfully taken across, Whoever recites

the name with love, the guru ferries them across the sea of existence.

Traditionally it is said that divine name for the Sikhs is Waheguru although the Supreme Being has infinite names. The names given to the Lord from his acts are many but the true name is the original and the oldest. It is clear that through an honest act God ordained living with the Lord's name in one's heart and on one's lips, the indwelling Lord in a guru centred human being becomes manifest. Such a guru centred being gets recognised as the light and the guide of the community to which he belongs:

O Nanak the Lord's name comes to abide in the mind of the Guru centred human being which is a real miracle that makes him/her influential and dominant in the society in which he/she lives. (Ibid., p.650)

One would assume that Lord's name being so basic to the message of the Guru Granth Sahib, there would be a unanimity among the Sikh scholars and the Sikh laity about how to go about remembering or repeating the Lords' name and about the best way to make the indwelling hidden divine name manifest. Gurbani says that "The Lord's name in imperceptibly pervading the Kaliyuga (the present age) and the Lord is fully filling every heart. The jewel of the Name becomes manifest within the mind of those, who run and repair to the Guru's refuge". (SGGS, p.1334)

The author is convinced that the Gurus had the capacity to make the indwelling Name manifest in the hearts of those who were considered fit for being bestowed with the grace of the Guru. The same capacity at times could be seen operating among the Sikhs close to the Guru. It has now come to pass that Amrit has come to be administered by the granthis of the gurdwaras or by Sants of various deras. However, one has to sadly admit that there is hardly a Sikh

who takes Amrit and within himself/herself he/she is able to see the divine spark manifesting itself nor the community is able to find much change in the behaviour and character of the Sikhs who had partaken of the Amrit. This is grave challenge for the modern Sikh sangats who hitch thier wagons to the Guru Granth Sahib.

The author had a discussion on the subject with one of the eminent Sikh scholars. His advice was to cultivate personal piety and try to lead life as per tenets of Gurbani and wait for the Guru's grace to descend. The search for a fellow traveller may lead one astray straight into snares spread by deradars, sants and mahants. One of the venerable granthis in one of the important historic gurdwaras affirmed that he knew of one sage who could serve as an ideal Sikh but somehow the author was unlucky as he was not given his address or whereabouts. If the present materialistic age has put the modern Sikhs with the latest revelatory message in a quandary like the above, the position of other religions is no better. The Muslims have withdrawn themselves into a shell of Shariat and there is hardly anyone upholding the Sufi tradition of Sheikh Farid. The theistic devotionism of the Hindus has given way to commercial exploitation of its symbols and deities or adherence to old rituals and sanskaras.

Bhai Vir Singh has been a saintly scholar revered by a whole generation of the Sikhs. He has frequently written about the ideals that Sikh manhood and womanhood are expected to project. He has described what should be the life style of an ideal Sikh. He has also shared his spiritual experience through his writings. When some one asked him a question about the divine name, he gave a reply to it by reciting a story. He said that a domestic bat had some guests to accommodate. The bat told its guests that they were welcome to cling to the roof like the host.

Guru Granth Sahib projects a worldview and a way of life which

can guide us in our quest for the divine name. The values that Gurbani requires a Sikh to internalise are:

- (i) Constant living in God/Guru's presence.
- (ii) A truthful living and sharing with others what one earns.
- (iii) A complete effacement of the self.
- (iv) Remaining totally unafraid.
- (v) Having no malice against anyone.
- (vi) Always helping/serving others.
- (vii) Absence of lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride and cultivation of contentment, mercy, steadfastness, forgiveness, humility and amiability.
- (viii) Always willing to accept what God/Guru ordained.
- (ix) Never finding scapegoats among others.

The ideal for a Sikh is that *I am not good and no one is evil.* (Ibid., p.728)

The Guru centred one recognises one's self and to him no one appears bad. (Ibid., p.1244).

- (x) Always remain absorbed in Gurbani through reciting it, through hearing its sung and through interaction and dialogue with the spiritual fellow travellers till the ideal of Guru's world imbedded in consciousness is achieved.
- (xi) Always remain grateful for the bounty of the Lord bestowed in plenty on everyone.
- (xii) Always remain repentant of the intended and unintended wrongs to others.
- (xiii) Always pray for the grace of the Guru to make the divine name manifest in one's heart.

Gurbani says that 'haun main' i.e. I and mine and the Lord's name are opposing tendencies which cannot be present in a human being at the same time. The 'haun main' can be subdued through the word of the guru and with his grace. 'Haun main' is commonly translated as ego which is not an adequate description. 'Haun main' is a concept unique to Gurbani. Except for a reference in passing by Kabir the word 'Haun main' does not figure in Bhagat Vani. Guru Arjan, has also used the word, 'khudi' in place of 'haun main'. As one can see 'khudi' is much more than 'ego'. The 'haun main' of gurbani is the whole of the self which is necessary condition of human personality. Arnold Toynbee, the historian was nearer the truth when he observed in 'An Historian's Approach to Religion' "self centredness is one of the necessities of life because it is indispensable for the creature's existence.... self centredness is thus a necessity of life but this necessity is also a sin. It is a problem that continually besets human beings". Guru Nanak saw humanity divided into basically two classes i.e. the Guru/God centred ones or (gurmukhs) and the self centred ones or (manmukhs). By not grasping the true import of 'haun main' we have allowed the ideal of 'gurmukh' to almost disappear from among the Sikhs and for others we have failed to provide the answer of the Gurus to the eternal human conundrum of why man falls in to sin despite all the knowledge that has been revealed to the human beings by God from time to time. Hindus have given this answer in restoring to asceticism, hatha yoga, tirth yatra and severe penances. The Christians remain caught up in the doctrine of original sin. Muslims are hardly able to solve the dichotomy as to why the human being created as Viceroy of God on earth again and again falls into sin. It is only the Guru Granth Sahib that can provide guidance to all faiths in solving such perennial issues confronting the human beings of all the faiths.

It seems to be unfortunate that over the last century the emphasis of the Sikh Studies shifted to political power and the Sikh identity to the neglect of the gems and pearls lying embedded in Gurbani. One hopes that with the initiative taken by the Guru Nanak Dev University the imbalance will get rectified and a new order of gurmukhs will emerge.

Status of Bhagat Bani in Guru Granth Sahib

—Dr. Shashi Bala

Guru Granth Sahib, as compiled by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604, incorporates the compositions of six Sikh Gurus, fifteen Bhagats or Saints of medieval period and panegyrics of fifteen Bhattas. The approach of the Holy Scripture is holistic and integrative with emphasis on the dynamic aspect of reality and pragmatic vision to socialise religion by envisaging the sovereign self-identity of man as well as the collective amelioration of social conditions. The present paper is an attempt to study the intimate relationship of the compositions of the Bhagats to the compositions of Gurus from the philosophical perspective.

(i) Introduction

The Bhagats whose compositions are included in Guru Granth Sahib represent nearly the four centuries of Indian thought from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the sixteenth century A.D.¹ The chronological order of these Bhagats and their different regions are depicted by Pashaura Singh as follows: Sheikh Farid (Pakpattan, Punjab), Jaidev (Birbhum, Bengal), Trilochan (Sholapur, Maharashtra), Sadhna (Sindh), Beni (Tonk, Rajasthan), Ramanand (Paryag, U.P.), Kabir (Banaras, U.P.), Ravidas (Banaras, U.P.), Pipa (Gagraun, M.P.), Sain (Rewa, M.P.), Dhanna (Tonk), Bhikan (Lucknow U.P.), Parmanand (Sholapur, Maharashtra), Surdas (Oudh, U.P.).² These Bhagats were the product of different religious traditions

and most of them came out of the lower strata of society. Sheikh Farid was a Muslim, Kabir was a weaver, Jaidev, Trilochan, Surdas and Ramanand were brahmins, Pipa was a raja, Dhanna, a jat or cultivator, Namdev, a calico-printer, Sain, a barbar; Sadhna a butcher, Ravidas a cobbler and the caste of Bhikan and Beni is not known.

The criterion for selection of the compositions of Bhagats was nirguna religiosity and conformity to the basic tenets of Guru Granth Sahib. The total number of hymns of Bhagats as included in the Holy Scripture are 349 besides the three long compositions of Kabir and 243 slokas of Kabir and 130 slokas of Sheikh Farid, (out of which some of the slokas are of Gurus). The arrangement of hymns in Guru Granth Sahib is not subject-wise but it is in accordance with the ragas. The total number of which is thirty-one and the Bhagat Bani is composed in twenty-two ragas and is placed at the end of each raga section. The hymns, ashtpadis, chhants and vars of the Gurus come first in the order of succession and then the hymns of the Bhagats in the same format, followed by Sahskriti Slokas, Gatha, Punhe and Chaubolas of Guru Arjan and slokas of Kabir and Farid, Savaiyas, slokas of Gurus, Mundavni and Ragamala. To preserve the identity of the compositions of the Bhagats, these have been denominated individually by their names such as Siri Raga Kabir Ji ka, Siri Raga Trilochan ka, Siri Raga Bani Bhagat Beni Ji ki and Raga Asa Bani Bhagatan Ki : Kabir Jiu, Namdev Jiu, Ravidas Jiu. The title of the compositions of the Bhagats reveal a profound spirit of regard towards the bhagats. So it is a misconception to regard the compositions of bhagats as 'at the lower end of this hierarchy of sanctity' as is mentioned by Gurinder Singh Mann.³

(ii) Attitude of Scholars towards Bhagat Bani

There are different versions in the early as well as in the later Sikh sources about the transmission, inclusion and status of the Bhagat

Bani in the Guru Granth Sahib. In the early Sikh tradition, Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* records that the bhagats approached to the fifth Guru and requested him to include their compositions in the Holy Scripture. This view presents difficulties due to chronological disorder. In the nineteenth century, the later Sikh sources, such as *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, *Sri Gurbilas Patashahi VI*, *Suraj Parkash*, *Tvarikh Guru Khalsa* held the view that the bhagats were made to appear in spiritual form before Guru Arjan Dev. This type of version was reacted by the twentieth century Singh Sabha Scholars who found close affinities between some of Guru Nanak's compositions and those of the Bhagats on the basis of internal evidence.⁴ Similarly, the divergent viewpoints are found among the Sikh scholars regarding the inclusion of Bhagat Bani in *Guru Granth Sahib*. Kesar Singh Chibbar in his *Bansavalinama* regards 'the low-caste Bhagats as menial servants (najar) of the Master'. Tara Singh Narotam in *Granth Sri Gurmat Nirnaya Sagar* claimed that Guru Arjan Dev himself has compiled the entire Bhagat Bani, keeping in mind the thought of each bhagat. In this way, he tried to maintain the affinity by attributing the whole Bhagat Bani to Guru Arjan Dev. Teja Singh Bhasaur, a protagonist of the radical wing of Singh Sabha initiated the negative approach and wanted to purify the Sikh tradition from all non-Sikh elements. As a reaction to this approach, the trend among the scholars changed and they tried to bring out close affinities between the compositions of Gurus and the compositions of Bhagats. Bhai Vir Singh stressed on the non-sectarian approach of the Sikh Gurus, the practical shape of which is evident in the inclusion of the compositions of the Bhagats, who belonged to different castes, different regions and also to different religious groups. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh held that the incorporation of Bhagat Bani in the *Guru Granth Sahib* reflects the cosmopolitan spirit of the holy scripture.⁵

(iii) Acknowledgement of Spiritual attainment of Bhagats by Gurus

The compositions of the Bhagats have not only been incorporated by Guru Arjan Dev in the Holy Scripture, but their spiritual attainment is duly acknowledged by the Gurus in their own hymns. The attainment of the exalted state of enlightenment of Namdev and Kabir is recorded in Siri Raga by Guru Amar Das. Though Namdev was a calico-printer and Kabir, a weaver, yet they realized the Divine word through the perfect preceptor by eliminating their ego and realized the highest state, which cannot be effaced by anyone.⁶ The divine recognition of Namdev, Jaidev, Trilochan, Kabir, Ravidas, Dhanna and Sain, is mentioned in Raga Bilawal by Guru Ram Das.⁷ Again in Raga Maru, while stressing on the efficacy of Divine Name in the Kaliage, Guru Ram Das narrates how the afflictions of Namdev, Jaidev, Kabir, Trilochan and Ravidas were eliminated and they got redeemed by their true devotion to the Divine Name.⁸

Guru Arjan Dev in Raga Asa Bani Bhagat Dhannaji ki, M.5., mentions the spiritual exaltation of Namdev, Kabir, Ravidas and Sain, who belonged to lower castes with little recognition in the mundane world, but they got spiritual elevation and recognition by their deep devotion to God, adoption of merits, detachment from worldliness and realizing divine presence within. The spiritual enlightenment of these bhagats inspired Dhanna, a cultivator to engage in devotion, and in this way, he was blessed with divine revelation.⁹ Here it is clear that the birth in low caste and meagre sources of life are no hindrance in the way of God and these are immaterial from the spiritual point of view. The elevated persons not only attain the heights of spirituality but they also become beaconlight for others. The interrelation of Bhagats with Gurus as well as with other Bhagats

is vividly explicit in the acknowledgement of spiritual status of bhagats in their respective hymns. Such as the blessing and spiritual awakening of Namdev and Jaidev is mentioned by Bhagat Kabir. (Kabir Gauri 36, GGS 330; Kabir, Bilawal 7, GGS 856, Kabir, Basant, 2, GGS 1194}

Guru Arjan Dev has not only acknowledged the spiritual enlightenment of these bhagats and their recognition among the saints of God but also explicated the diverse ways through which these bhagats attained Divine Grace. As is stated in Raga Basant M. 5.:

*Dhanna served Him with child-like simplicity.
Trilochan by contact with the Master success obtained.
Beni by the Master was illumination granted.
My self! Thou too be God's Servant. (5)
Jaidev his egoism discarded.
Sain the barber was by serving the Lord saved.
Nowhere was the mind of these devotees shaken.
My self! thou too by taking shelter with the Lord shalt
be saved (6)
Such of the devotees as by the Lord were shown grace
were by Him saved-
Their merits and demerits He reckoned not.
Beholding such state is my mind in the Lord's service
engaged. (7)
Kabir with constant devotion on Him meditated.
Namdev with the Lord abided.
Ravidas too on the Incomparable Lord meditated.
Guru Nanak Dev is the very image of the Lord. (8)¹⁰*

The various ways mentioned in the above stated hymn, such as simplicity of mind, meeting with the divine preceptor, elimination of ego, selfless service, constant meditation and firm devotion are

consistent with the teachings of the Gurus. The last line of this hymn is translated in different ways by different scholars. As Prof. G.S. Talib translated it as, 'Guru Nanak Dev is the very image of the Lord.' Dr. Gopal Singh translated it as, 'So will I too dwell on Nanak, the Guru, who is the very manifestation of God.' Prof. Sahib Singh translated it as, 'O Nanak, Guru is form (rup) of God.'¹² Pashaura Singh points out that, 'a subtle distinction between the unique status of Guru Nanak as embodiment of God and the bhagats as the devotees of God is made and concludes that 'the primacy of the status of the Guru is retained over the status of the bhagats in the Sikh scriptural tradition.' He also narrates the meaning of the terms bhagat and Guru to stress that the bhagat is 'seeker after truth and liberation' and the term Guru 'stands for the voice of Akal Purukh mystically uttered within the human heart, mind and soul.'¹³

However, some scholars on the basis of internal evidence about the distinction between the Guru and bhagat as is found in *Guru Granth Sahib*, tried to prove the supremacy of Guru to bhagat. There is no denying the fact that the significance of Guru or divine preceptor is highlighted in the *Gurbani* and Guru is defined as the manifestation of God Himself. The Bhagats, whose compositions have been incorporated in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, emerged from the different phases of Bhakti movement, which originated in the South and spread to the other parts of India. This Bhakti Movement was a sort of religious revival, in which the utmost stress was laid on the bhakti-marga. The common appellation 'bhagat' used for the adherents of this Bhakti Movement indicates the stress on the path of devotion and it does not mean as seeker after truth or mere devotee of God, because the spiritual attainment of these bhagats is duly acknowledged by the Gurus in their own hymns. Nonetheless, this fact of keeping the status of Gurus higher than the bhagats seems not the intention

of the compiler and this cosmopolitan spirit is more explicit, when Guru Gobind Singh conferred the status of Guru on Guru Granth Sahib, which incorporates the compositions of Bhagats also. Similarly, no such difference is found in the Sikh liturgical practices such as *vak laina* and recitation of Gurbani in musical measures in the holy congregation.

(iv) Doctrinal Aspect of the hymns of Gurus and Bhagats

Guru Granth Sahib enunciates the monotheistic aspect of Ultimate Reality i.e. Transcendent and Immanent; Unmanifest and Manifest; Impersonal and Personal; Nirguna and Sarguna. It repudiates the doctrine of incarnation and idol-worship and stresses on inward religiosity rather than outward formalism and ritualism. The compositions of the bhagats, included in the Guru Granth Sahib, are in consonance with the basic tenets of the Granth. Though these bhagats belonged to different regions with diverse religious and cultural background, yet there is similarity in their style of writing. They used the vernacular language and expressed their ideas through similies, idioms and metaphors. There is doctrinal agreement on themes such as God, soul, human life, world, nam, Guru, union with God, human equality etc. The complete identity of the compositions of Gurus and those of Bhagats, is stated in the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism as:

“These two streams mingle together completely and no distinctions are ever made among the writings emanating from them. They all, the writings of the Gurus as well as those of the Bhagats, constitute one single text. On any point of precept and doctrine, both will have equal validity. Both enjoy equal esteem and reverence. In fact, the notion of two does not exist. Both signal one single metaphysical truth.”¹⁴

Though the main doctrinal themes are in conformity with the basic spirit of the Granth, yet the reflections of their religious background are maintained in the Holy Scripture. For instance, Jaidev's use of Vaishnava names of God such as Hari, Chakardhar, Govinda and Sheikh Farid's adherence to Shariat' day of judgement, fear of dozak, satan, etc reveal their respective religious background.

(v) Reflections of Gurus on Bhagat Bani

An intimate relationship with Bhagat Bani is established in three ways in the Holy Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib. First, in the reflections of the Gurus on the compositions of the Bhagats as is seen in the slokas of Kabir and Sheikh Farid. The total number of Kabir's slokas is 243, out of which 237 slokas are of Kabir, 1 slok is of Guru Amar Das and 5 slokas are of Guru Arjan Dev. In a similar way, the total number of Sheikh Farid's slokas is 130 out of which 112 slokas are of Sheikh Farid and 18 slokas are of Gurus (4 slokas of Guru Nanak, 5 slokas of Guru Amar Das, 1 slok of Guru Ram Das and 8 slokas of Guru Arjan Dev). Second, in the insertion of slokas of the Bhagats in the compositions of the Gurus as is evident in *Gujari ki var* (pp. 509-10), *Var Bihagara* (p.555) and in the *Var of Ramkali* (pp. 947-48). Third, in replacing Guru Arjan Dev's hymns alongwith the compositions of the Bhagats and initiating a dialogue with these Bhagats. This type of inter-dialogue takes place in the compositions of Kabir, Farid, Dhanna and Surdas. Though the insertion of Guru Arjan Dev's hymns in the compositions of the Bhagats is a sort of reflection but it bears the signature of the Bhagat who is commented upon.

The main themes which emerge in the reflections of the Gurus relate not to the conceptual aspect but to the basic attitude towards life and world, time of prayer, age for worship, effect of company, moral purification, renunciation, human efforts and divine grace, dying

to live and the integration of action and contemplation. A minute analysis of the responses of the Gurus towards verses of the Bhagats makes this point more clear.

While comparing the door of salvation with the width of the tenth part of sesame seed and the inflated mind to an elephant, Kabir expresses the positive attitude to pass through it by meeting with the Guru. Guru Amar Das endorsed this view of Kabir and elaborates it by holding ego as the cause of mind's rigidity and provides a spiritual prescription of meeting with the Guru who eliminates ego and fills the mind with divine light enabling the soul to get release and to enjoy the state of equanimity.¹⁵

Similarly, the theme of dying to self or 'living dead' is hinted at by Kabir which is further explicated by Guru Amar Das who suggests that it could be possible by Guru's Grace, abandoning self-centeredness and disciplining the mind through God's fear and curing all maladies through divine love.¹⁶ At another place, Kabir laments that no one knows how to die? and if anyone knows it, he may not die again. Guru Amar Das's response is a sort of recommendation that dying to self takes place in constant remembrance of God through Guru's grace and such death means eternal living.¹⁷

In another verse, Kabir stresses on personal efforts to obtain divine favour and resents his incapability to attain divine favour despite of his hard penances. He employs the analogy of henna and says, 'my effort was like the henna's' but he is contradicted by Guru Amar Das who says, 'Be thou like the henna, but wait (patiently) for the Grace of God.' Here the emphasis is on the Divine Will in accordance with which one can attain Divine love. The need is to surrender with spirit of equanimity.¹⁸ Again when Kabir says, 'Why should we propose and make schemes when our efforts prove futile before God's schemes', Guru Amardas responds that God Himself

puts care in man and Himself makes man free of care.’¹⁹ The main point is that God Himself is Doer of all actions and He Himself inspires man to do. Man must transcend his narrow self-centeredness to gain divine favour.

This theme of divine grace is also stressed by Guru Nanak in commenting on Sheikh Farid’s verse. Sheikh Farid states that morning time is best time for prayer and those who manage to awake in the morning for prayer, are blessed by God. Guru Nanak’s comment reveals that the blessing of God, cannot be claimed as a matter of right, through personal efforts but it comes on its own accord or spontaneously, If God Wills, He may bless some shaking them out of their slumber.²⁰ The early morning as the time for prayer is also stated in slok 107, where Farid opines that those who don’t arise in the early morning are like dead while living. Guru Arjan Dev explains the merit of early morning prayer in the following four verses (slok 108 to slok 111) and comments in the last slok as :

*Farid ! our hearts in the world are dyed that is worthless;
Hard is the way of life of God’s devotees,
That by supreme good fortunate may be attained.*²¹

Here it is clearly stated that awaking early morning is not sufficient, if one’s mind remains indulged in worldly things. But this type of detachment amid worldly living is possible only through divine grace.

In Guru Granth Sahib, the divine grace is not bound within the limits of time and space. Sheikh Farid in Slok 12, insists on the specific time of man’s life i.e. period of young age, for praying to God. He observes that those who do not love God in youth, rarely do so in old age. In slok 13, Guru Amar Das responds to the above view of Farid by stressing on the point of divine grace. The period of youth and of old age are immaterial for worshipping God, because

the devotion to God comes not by man's own personal efforts or by mere wish but this divine love is conferred on man due to divine grace.²²

Guru Granth Sahib repudiates the rigorous penances and ascetic practices and stresses on the balanced way of life which means moderate living in spirit of detachment. Sheikh Farid's sloks, at certain places, give reflection of his adherence to ascetic practices. As in slok 119, Sheikh Farid expresses his intense desire to meet God and to fulfil this desire, he is ready to undergo strenuous penances like burning his body in furnace and burning his bones as fuel or walking on his head if his feet tire. This view is commented upon by Guru Nanak Dev in slok 120, by stating that one need not torture the poor limbs of the body by these hard penances, because the need is to visualise God within one's own self. This viewpoint is further elaborated by Guru Ram Das in slok 121 which holds that God resides within but is inaccessible and can be approached or recognised through the divine preceptor.²³

Prof. Sahib Singh observes that if we relate slok 119 with slok 125, then the position of Sheikh Farid becomes apparent.²⁴ Sheikh Farid compares the human body, caught among waves of desire, with the solitary bird, sitting on the edge of a lake with numerous snares around it and holds that it can be saved by divine grace. He asks what words to utter, what qualities to acquire, what rich jewels of speech to master, what wears to adopt to win the Divine love ? In the next four slokas (slokas 127-130), the stress is given on the cultivation of moral virtues. The essential prerequisite is humility, forgiveness and sweet speech.²⁵ The other qualities to be adopted are innocence even when wise, powerless even though blessed with power, sharing with others even though slender store, speaking no harsh words and breaking no heart.²⁶ Similarly, in slok 103, Sheikh

Farid's view of 'tearing of silken robes' and assuming coarse woollen wear' gives an indication to the life of renunciation, which is corrected in slok 104 by Guru Amar Das who emphasised on the inner purity as the supreme virtue to meet God, which can be attained by living a life of householder. This point of inner purity is further elaborated by Guru Arjan Dev in slok 105 which suggests the way to purity by shedding pride of beauty, riches and worldly greatness.²⁷

This theme of inner purity amid the normal course of living is stressed elsewhere, where Sheikh Farid in slok 51 holds that the devotees of God being imbued with divine love, lose all blood due to hard penance and even if their body is cut, no drop of blood will be seen. This view is contradicted and clarified by Guru Amar Das in slok 52, by pointing out that human body cannot exist without blood. Those who are imbued with God's love are devoid of the blood of greed because the impurities of foul thinking are destroyed by God's fear in a similar way as the impurity of metals is purified by fire.²⁸

However, the response of Gurus to the Bhagats bani aimed at stressing the basic precepts of Guru Granth Sahib viz., nam japna, kirt karna and vand chhakana. This is possible only by living detached amidst worldly life. Wherever Sheikh Farid presents a gloomy view of life that the world is gripped by sufferings, Guru Arjan Dev modifies it by stressing on the delightful aspect of life, which can be visualised and attained, if one loves God. Again the emphasis is on nam-simarn as well as performance of routine duties. The inter-dialogue of bhagats makes this theme more explicit. In Kabir's hymns, it appears sometimes that Kabir left his profession of weaving, as his mother laments and Kabir's reply that 'so long as I pass the thread through the shuttle, so long do I forget my loved Lord, Who is refuge of mine and my children.'²⁹ Trilochan's reply to Bhagat Namdev in Guru Arjan

Dev's verse indicates 'with the tongue utter the Name of the Lord and work with hands and feet but cherish thy God, detached in heart.'³⁰

To conclude, we can say that the underlying spirit of these reflections of the Gurus on the compositions of the Bhagats is to elucidate, to expatiate, to comment and to contradict the point in order to bring these compositions in conformity to the basic spirit of Guru Granth Sahib which enunciates the monotheistic aspect of the Ultimate Reality and vehemently condemns the outward formalism to emphasize the inward religiosity. However, the inclusion of the compositions of the Bhagats, the acknowledgement of their spiritual status and the preservation of their individual identity provide an ecumenical outlook to Guru Granth Sahib and is also indicative of its catholic and cosmopolitan spirit.

References

1. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1993, p. 50.
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3. Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, pp. 117-18.

He observes :

‘The hymns of Guru Nanak result directly from the original revelation and are taken to constitute the pinnacle of sacred Sikh Literature; the next stage belongs to hymns created by the Sikh Gurus who carried the light of Guru Nanak; at the third stage came the hymns by the Sikhs who were initiated into sainthood by the Gurus themselves and the hymns of Bhagats, are at the lower end of this hierarchy of sanctity.’

4. Pashaura Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-12.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-165.
6. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 67.

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Fundamental Issues of Human Consciousness and Religion

—*Dr. Manmohan Singh*

Throughout human history, religions in their social, cultural, political forms and as sources of comfort, healing and spiritual development have been important and often dominant in the lives of people. They have provided means of personal development and uplift and of an orderly and moral existence in society. At the same time with their varied institutional, theological and philosophical constructions and languages, they have been instrumental in dividing mankind and fostering conflicts and violence. For thousands of years, large scale wars and violence in every part of the world have been rooted in religious divisions. This paradox remains alive today. The many ongoing religion-based conflicts as well as a century of needed efforts at interfaith understanding and healing indicates that it is important but intractable issue for mankind.

To understand the nature of the problem, how it develops, how it may be resolved and the guidance provided by Sri Guru Granth and other scriptures, we need to proceed from the perspective of human *consciousness* that is, the process of *knowing* and *being* itself. Not only are scriptures concerned mainly with transformation of human consciousness but it is here that life's questions and their answers and both suffering and healing and evil and good happen and become established. Fundamental issues of human life and their

solutions are ultimately issues of the recurring cycles of the development and emergence of consciousness and individuals and societies, and the conflicts, questions and the quest for answers it leads to.

CONSCIOUSNESS ITSELF AS AN ISSUE

The first grand issue is consciousness itself. Though knowable at personal/private level as life's essential experience, and indeed as life itself, it is exceedingly difficult to describe, define and analyse. Scholar, theologians, scientists and indeed all humans have been asking, and will continue to ask questions such as these: How does it relate to material? Is it all-pervasive and exists in distinct and confined packages in various living forms? Is individual consciousness or Atma distinct from divine consciousness or parmatma? Do animals have consciousness and soul and is it the same or different than that in human beings? How does it evolve and manifest in human beings and determine perception, thought, beliefs, knowledge and wisdom? Does it die with the individual? Is it the same as God, just an attribute of God or simply a product of created life? The Man being an intelligent and conscious will ask these questions. But the self-same faculty can deny the very existence and reality of consciousness.

The very essence of any religious revelation and experience lies in the realm of consciousness but theological interpretation and discourses can create fundamental conflicts and misinterpretations. Any attempt at Interfaith dialogue and understanding should, therefore proceed from some understanding of this subject. The purpose of this paper is to give a Gurbani-related development of human consciousness in order to form a model within which one can understand how any religion becomes part of human life and comes to be the paradoxical influence it often is. It is hoped that this model

will provide a meaningful approach to a Gurbani-based Interfaith dialogue and understanding relating different aspects of religions to the needs and tendencies of human beings at different levels of evolution of consciousness.

Consciousness and Gurbani

That consciousness and its development is the basic subject of Gurbani can be illustrated by numerous quotations from Sri Guru Granth. In thousands of places, this subject is discussed in relation to spiritual development, the errors of undertaking that occur in human life and how the errors are to be corrected. In Japji, for example, consider the description of Saram Khand or the Realm of spiritual endeavour (also sometimes interpreted the Realm of Shame after realization of the ego-boundedness in consciousness):

ਸਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਰੂਪ॥

ਤਿਥੈ ਘਾਤਤਿ ਘੜੀਐ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਨੂਪ॥

ਤਾ ਕੀਆ ਗਲਾ ਕਥੀਆ ਨਾ ਜਾਹਿ॥

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਪਿਛੈ ਪਛਤਾਇ॥

ਤਿਥੈ ਘੜੀਐ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਮਨਿ ਬੁਧਿ॥

ਤਿਥੈ ਘੜੀਐ ਸੁਰਾ ਸਿਧਾ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ॥

(ਜਪੁਜੀ, ਪਉੜੀ ੩੬)

The realm of spiritual endeavour has beauteous expression. There the moulding of human personality is most astounding. Such that it is beyond description. If anyone tries to describe it comes to repent afterwards. Moulded there is the consciousness, understanding, mind and intellect. And formed there is the awareness of the gods and spiritual modes.

Again elsewhere

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਅਪਣਾ ਮੂਲ ਪਛਾਣੁ॥

(ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੩)

O mind of mine, your reality is that of the Divine light, recognize your true origin.

ਏਕਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਜੇਤੇ ਹੈਂ ਜੀਅ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕੀਅ॥

ਜੇਹੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਤੇਹਾ ਤਿਨ ਰਾਹ॥ ਲੇਖਾ ਏਕੋ ਆਵਹੁ ਜਾਹ॥

(ਸਿਰੀ ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧)

All living beings are endowed with one and the same life consciousness. Without that consciousness there is none. As in the quality of consciousness (as the stage of evolution of each), so is the way of life. Coming and going of life is determined by one and the same Law.

To begin at the beginning

Man's first consciousness on separating from the mother's womb is that of pain and suffering and that of contentment when the reunion with the mother takes place. The infant human awakens with cries when hungry or discomfited and sleeps peacefully when fed and comforted. There is laid the seed of what is to be recurring cycles of pain and pleasure throughout life and what Buddha describes as the first Noble Truth, that is *Life is Suffering* (Dukha).

An infant's consciousness is limited to preordained and pre-programmed needs of bodily functions, a level not different or more advanced than the animal level of consciousness. This may be described as *Simple Consciousness*. In it, whatever happens is largely automatic and the infant has little, if any, ability to differentiate itself from others, recognize itself as apart from others, attribute the needs to itself and show any inkling of what may be considered as free will. It is a helpless and totally dependent creature.

Religious dogmas grew with difficulty at this stage of development, for it raises many fundamental questions for which the answers were varied and conflicting. Noteworthy are questions regarding the beginning point of the human life, the presence of soul in the foetus and infant, and the point at which the protoplasmic mass

in the womb becomes a person with human rights. Much controversy and conflict surrounds these issues, especially in the Judeo-Christian world, sometimes to the point of killing people of differing views in the name of saving life! So the beginning of an individual with soul becomes a great theological and moral issue. Connected with this is the issue of the treatment of the non-human sentient beings.

The Formation of Man-Child

Typically by the age of two, the possessive idea of “me” “mine”, recognition of self, by name and the ability to say ‘no’ are well-developed and lead to the first child tussles for control and authority. Dubbed the ‘terrible two’s (from the parents’ point of view, of course), this is the period when the awareness of self as apart from others is beginning to take shape, as are conflicts inherent to this process.

It is early yet for the formation of idea of others as autonomous persons with specific rights and responsibilities as apart from one’s area. Also, there is little sense of time and history in terms of past, present and future, and of the idea of death. In the years to come, all of these will develop slowly but surely so that by the time of the ‘terrible teens’ (again, from the parents point of view), the child is transformed into a man-child in the process of becoming an adult. A sense of self, separate and independent of others and capable of exercising free will and of reasoning on the basis of differentiation of time and space and the formation of idea of causes and effect relationship between independent persons, events, entities and phenomena.

Adolescence is the time of transition to adulthood in which the need for dependency in parents and conformity to their will struggles with the road to be free, independent and self-directed. Religion upto the point has been largely a process of acquisition of parental beliefs and customs. Its practice is apt like the performance

of conforming rituals for the acceptance of elders an authority figure, or, for the achievement of success through prayers and offerings to a personalized deity of power greater than that of the parents and authority figures in society. With the struggle for autonomy and the expected rebellion of teenage years, comes the questioning and possible rejection of the religion of father and mother and a search for primary beliefs in oneself or one's non idea of God as the moving force in that person's life. For institutional religions charged with social-cultural responsibility for teaching morality, this is a critical challenge to their authority as well as an opportunity to seduce the individual away from the beliefs and practices of its parents to its own particular brand of the mystical promised land. There is born the great issue of conformity and acceptance of the social-cultural norms of the group and the rebellion and search for individualisation of the man-child.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Becoming an adult human means the full formation of consciousness of oneself (self-consciousness) as an independent thinking, acting and believing individual with goals, ambitions and desires and the will to follow one's own way in life. All others are to be seen as friends or foes in terms of these personal goals and ambitions. With the exception of flashes of true self-less altruism, love and hate, good and bad and all manners of other thoughts are to be conditioned hereforth by dualities of I/You, Me/Them, Man/Nature, Man/God, Mind/Body, Past/Future, Black/White, Man/Woman, Good/Bad etc. All perceptions of reality are to be conditioned by the mindsets of the self or what Gurbani refers to as *Haumai*. Differences and conflicts are the inevitable consequences, as are the attendant pain and pleasure.

This solitary journey of Man is the subject of the many heroic

myths of religious history in which the ego-bounded self (self-consciousness) is the central player fighting battles of the qualities of good and evil, acquiring helpful friends and fighting the demons and searching for an ultimate personal victory in some far off land of mystery. In nearly all religions this ego-bounded state of being is depicted as the source of Man's struggles so that the central issue of human life becomes this individual centre of man.

In the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions, this issue is depicted as the Fall of Man and Expulsion of Man from the Garden of Eden for succumbing to the temptation for casual desire and eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of self as an autonomous agent. Buddha states that *Tanha* or cravings or attachments of the personal self is the fundamental cause of Man's suffering. In Vedic-Upanishidic scriptures, essentially the same idea appears as captivation of Jiva by the seductive illusion and the deception, truth, May a or the Falsehood of manifest. Existence as reality and the suffering of the Atma (soul) is the recurring cycles of life and death. In Sri Guru Granth, it appears quite clearly that "*Haumai*, the self important ego, is the great disease". In all religions, the solution to this problem is considered to lie in the sacred, divine or immortal reality that is beyond man's ordinary or individual consciousness. However, differences and conflicts emerge in the further development of these two ideas into theology, cosmology religious practice and moral principles. Broadly, those differences may be considered to fall into groups in the terminology of consciousness.

(A) The essential duality of Man/God, Human/Divine remains as the defining feature and Man's Solution is considered to require the intercession of a prophet or a God's chosen messenger:

The inspiration of this prophet or divine messenger is formed into a new social-cultural religious order religion. The suprahuman

intelligence or force is personalized as God or a diety and the prophet as the intermediary or saviour. Distinct institutions representing the prophet/messenger come to dominate the lives of the followers because the wisdom and authority of the religious institution is considered of divine origin and therefore, infalliable. The individual is considered eerant and fallible unless sanctioned and accepted by the religious institution. All outside the circle are considered heathens, misguided and fallen individuals. Each religious order of this kind can claim a unique and exclusive path to God or a special place in God's scheme of things. Thus, the very duality of consciousness and the self-attainment which is considered to be the basic problem of the individual because institutionalised in groups of people or societies turned against each other and competing with each other with larger resources than an individual possessor. As such the possibility of large scale conflict and violence takes the place of individual-central conflicts and violence. On the other hand, the formation of such religious institutions serves the crucial functions of providing social-cultural order and a moral compass for people, without which there would be chaos of self-guided and selfish individual. The benefits lie in a supportive and organizing social framework for individuals while the risk lies in the potential control of a large number of people by chosen and sacrificed persons and the inevitable subjugation of the will and welfare of individuals to the whims and wishes of the chosen few.

(B) The creative intelligence, force or consciousness is recognized as unitary and pervasive throughout creation (see above) but differently manifest in different forms or at different stages of development:

It is both inside and outside the individual and the level at which it is experienced depends upon the state of spiritual or consciousness

development. A spiritual master or guide is helpful and even necessary but the progress depends upon the wilful spiritual efforts of the individual. Reaching higher states of consciousness requires willing self-surrender. The seeker may personalize a deity or deities representing different attributes of the sanitory force at different stages in this development. The one absolute is thus experienced both as Nirgun or attributeless and Sargun or as all attributes in Oneness.

Both forms of religion may co-exist as institutional and as charismatic or inspirational versions of a particular religion, representing essentially the intellectual and experiential or emotional aspects of the religious process. From the point of view of the individual who is established in the self-consciousness stage of development, any form of religion will be viewed within the dualistic perspective and accepted or rejected to a personal world view and the needs of the person. The religions can or cannot meet making and exercising a choice is of the essence of being an individual. A self-serving view of religion may come into operation as a need for acceptance or achievement of privilege through conformity with a group's cultural-religious belief systems. It may also come into play in times of distress and frustration of personal goals and desires. At such times, the person will beseech of the delay, make offerings or use recommended incantations or expiatory procedures (Yagnas) to receive boons, achieve success or defeat of the enemies. For the rest the self important individual is likely to reject the existence of any reality beyond that which cannot be personally experienced or verified through methods considered rational, scientific and objective, in which man in his only measure.

In the more recent history of mankind, the ascendant emphasis on individual versus the collective has increasingly led to the so-called rational, scientific and objective methods of enquiry and secular

institutions of governance, science, technology and arts have emerged as alternative to what in the past were faith and religion-based functions and institutions. All of these depend upon personal and verifiable experiences, individual and collective, as the determinants of reality and truth. Nothing beyond that is accepted as necessary or real. Operation of self-consciousness is the method of choice. Therefore, secular versus the religions, alongwith the individual versus the collective has emerged as the greatest issue of modern times. Derivatives of this issue are such topics as Reasons Vs Faith, Individual Vs Society, Intellect Vs Emotions, Head Vs Heart, Material Vs Spiritual, Science Vs Religion etc., which occupy and entertain many a scholar, scientist and philosopher. Therefore, divisions of various faiths in the past are now divisions created by Reason, Science and Secularism. As such the challenges for Interfaith Understanding are now more profound and diverse than before. Whether religion can meet the needs of ever-more divided and unsettled mankind for healing and harmony requires reconciling of very many streams of thought that have emerged among modern humans.

PERSONAL CRISIS, DEATH AND RELIGIOUS QUEST

We come now to the final chapter of this life story which typically begins at times of great self-doubt, disease, awareness of persons nearing demise and the questioning of the very purpose and meaning of life. Intelligence, wealth, power and a sense of infallibility which have been objects of great pride and attachment prove to be of no help in relief of the sense of helplessness and existential depression. Mind is apt to be focused as news before on search for a meaningful and fear free life from a source beyond oneself. Attention will turn to religion with personal intensity and commitment as never before. Heart rather than the head leads to the search for an experience of reality and truth which the reasoning and debating mind cannot

provide. The self-important self becomes open to consciousness far greater and expansive and thus begins a religious quest of true personal commitment and self-discovery. Gurbani puts it thus: Suffering becomes the medicine and comfort the disease.

Charismatic faith in Christianity, Sufism and Islam, the path of right mindfulness and right absorption in Buddhism, the Sanyas and Dhyan Samadhi of Yog and life of Naam Simran and Shabad Kirtan of Sikhism and Bhagati Yoga of various Bhagati Movements are all religions of this kind. They provide ways for an individual to grow, through spiritual effort, from his narrow, ego-bounded and fragmented state of consciousness to one that is open, coherent, free-flurring, unbounded and in perfect equanimity. However, they are not without their ego-traps and mis-directions. Self-rejection and self-punishment to kill the 'wicked desires' of the flesh, withdrawal from the seductive Maya in search of the God, rejection of worldly life and social respectability, pursuits of occult power and personal immortality etc. are some of the ways in which the gift of life is rejected and denigrated. As Gurbani points out, these too are manifestations of the self-important ego or *Haumai*. There is as much of grand delusion in self-immolation as in self-inflation. The very self-consciousness state of beingness that gives Man the will and the freedom of grow-up from an animal state and to be able to pursue higher and higher states of consciousness is also the source of his self-imprisonment and suffering. Says Gurbani:

ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਖ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ॥

(ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧)

Self important I-am-ness is the great disease but contains also its cure.

The resolution of this and other paradox of human consciousness is the great challenge of religions and it is here that

Gurbani of Sri Guru Granth is of vital importance. It is not only able to provide an understanding of the paradoxes of human existence but also offers numerous ways of bridging and healing the divisions that arise out of ego-bounded existence. For providing understanding, our avoiding ego-traps that lie on the road to salvation and blissful equanimity, Sri Guru Granth is the most profound source. It is this sense also, perhaps more than any other, that this sacred ocean of wisdom is invaluable as Interfaith scripture.

All Languages Meditate on Vahiguru

—Dr. Harinder Singh

It is a preliminary exploration to introduce the “nexus” of the language(s) of Guru Granth Sahib from a socio-linguistics perspective. It does so by the commonly adopted method of having sections dealing with the linguistic approaches, historical scene, societal norms, prevalent modes of communications, and samples from hybridized languages. Less conventionally, it has a major portion that, against the backdrop of phonetics and syntax aspects of linguistics, presents the principal features of the language of Guru Granth Sahib.

Languages has no meaning, but what one powerful voice gives to it, and as a beautiful personality speaks it. The dumb sweetness of the rose has a hundred meanings and the silence of the stars transcends all languages, for they cease to have any significance beyond a particular octave. So all languages are mere routine dull speeches till a genius puts his personality into them.

(Prof. Puran Singh)

1.1 Language

Languages in the ordinary sense refers to a particular language such as English or Panjabi. In addition, it is the phenomenon of vocal and written communication among human beings by a means of system of symbols that are principally transmitted by vocal sounds in an order that shows the relationship between them. The utterances

have variety of functions in addition to communicating facts : “to express emotions or to reinforce a relationship with somebody” (Poole, p.8). For our purposes, we may look at a definition given by a modern British linguist, David Crystal, who wrote the following (Crystal, p.251):

The discussion may be summarized by referring to a language as human vocal noise (or the graphic representation of this noise in writing) used systematically and conventionally by a community for purposes of communication,

1.2 World of Language

Familiarity with the languages of the world can often shed light on understanding the development and relevance of a particular language, especially of a scripture. Today, in all there exist roughly 4,000 languages, all of which can be divided into thirteen or fourteen different categorical families. The largest linguistic family is that of the Indo-Aryan family. This particular family contains languages popular in the Northern Hemisphere of India including Panjabi, Sindhi, Gujrati, Marathi, Hindi, Bihari, Oriya, Bengali, Assami etc. It also includes such languages as Pushto from Afghanistan, Farsi from Iran, and the European languages; English, French, German and Russian (Singh [4], pp.2-3). All have a current literary standard and are linked to major political units. Across the main area, separate languages have arisen largely by division within a geographical continuum. Hence, internal branches are still not definitely established. These modern day languages over the centuries evolved into their current form. A number of causes of language change have been recognized, including some which are controversial, but eight of the least controversial are as follows: Ease of articulation, expression of new meaning, desire for novelty, regularization of rule

extension, redundancy reduction, meta-analysis, obsolescence of meaning, and language contact (Hudson, pp.411-25).

Vedic, whose later form became Sanskrit, was the ancient language of the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. Attested by collections of religious formulate and hymns transmitted orally (the Vedas), of which, the most archaic linguistically is the Rig Veda, datable to the second millennium BCE. Then came Pali that was primarily used to articulate the Buddhist writings. Classical Sanskrit is the form that became standard after the middle of the first millennium BCE, by which time the spoken language was progressively evolving into vernacular forms called Prakrits. The further development of the languages collectively is called Apbhransh. The modern Indian languages are derivatives of Apbhransh (Singh [2], pp.11-12). See table 1, as developed by Harkirat Singh, for approximations on their time period :

LANGUAGES	INITIATED	ELOPED
Vedic / Sanskrit	1,500 BCE	500 BCE
Pali	500 BCE	1 CE
Prakrit	1 CE	500 CE
Apbhransh	500 CE	1,000 CE
Modern Indie	1,000 CE	-

[Table 1 : Languages and their Derivation]

The writing scripts were directly or indirectly derived from the Brhamini script, attested in ancient India from the second half of the 1st millennium BCE. Modern forms include Devanagri and other scripts often with characters of very different shapes (Padam, pp. 41-3). The basic type is alpha-syllabic. Gurmukhi script was developed for writing Gurbani. Panjabi is a distinct literary language from the 11th century Indo-Aryan family, spoken in the Panjab provinces of

Pakistan and India as well as through emigration in Britain, Canada, United States, Malaysia, Singapore, and so on. Adherents of different religions write it differently:

Muslim in an Arabi script derived from that of Persian.

Sikhs in Gurmukhi script, developed from Brahmi as a vehicle of the Sikh scriptures.

Hindus in Gurmukhi or Devanagri.

Considering the current day East and West Panjab, there are eleven recognized dialects of Panjabi; Majhi, Bhattiani, Rathni, Ludhianvi, Doabi, Patialwi, Powadhi, Malwi, Multani (Siraiki), Pothahari, Hindko (Kalar, p.3). The last three can arguably call Panjabi a dialect of themselves. Therefore, when we set forth to understand Gurbani—the term referred for the language of the Guru Granth Sahib, it is imperative that we understand the historical influences, which had an affect on the evolution of the language(s) and culture of the land of contributors, i.e. six Gurus, fifteen Bhagats. and two Devotees. It helps to understand, even if at a very superficial level, why the Gurus communicate in the different languages or a mixture thereof (hybrid) rather than one standard language. In conclusion (Shackle [2], p.2):

It [Gurbani] draws upon variety of local languages and dialects as well as incorporating a good many archaic forms and words. In these respects it is entirely typical of the written languages in which the religious literature of medieval India are mostly recorded. In order to avoid misleading simplified titles like 'Old Panjabi', the languages has been referred to here as 'the sacred language of the Sikhs', abbreviated as SLS.

1.3 Historical Background

The land of the Gurus, the Northwest frontier of Panjab (the region now both in Pakistan and India), through the centuries experienced many invasions. Indologists are not agreed on the age of Indic civilization except that it is among the oldest in the world and that its center was in the Panjab. The generally accepted view is that quite a sophisticated people, Harappan Culture, occupied this land and cities flourished in this region up to 2700-1500 BCE (Mansingh, p. 167). These people were eventually destroyed by invaders known as the Aryans, who began to infiltrate the Panjab about three centuries before the birth of Christ (Mansingh, p.42). The Aryans, who were tall and fair, drove out the darker-skinned inhabitants and occupied most of the Northern Hemisphere of India. The newcomers were a pastoral people with a religion and a language of their own. Both of these further developed in the land of their domicile. It was in the Panjab that Vedic thought evolved, and many works of Sanskrit literature written there. Other races followed the Aryans. The Persians under Darius invaded this land in 521-485 BCE. In 327 BCE Greek armies under Alexander the Great crossed the Indus and swept on as far as Beas (Mansingh, p.33). The Bactrian invader, Menander, extinguished the Indian Maurya, who ruled after the death of Alexander the Great. Many Scythian tribes followed the Bactrians. When the dust settled, the Indian Guptas took over and were able to block out the foreign invaders. By 500 CE, however, the pressure from Central Asia became too great and once more the gates were forced upon to let in the Mongoloid Huns. The Huns were subdued and expelled by Vardhana. His son Harsha was the last great Indian ruler of the Panjab. After Harsha's death in 647 CE, Vardhana's empire disintegrated and races living across the Sulaiman Hills and Hindu Kush mountains began to pour in (Mansingh, p.169). The new

conquerors belonged to diverse tribes but had one faith; Islam. In 1001 CE Mahmud of Ghazni came (Mansingh, p.243). Thereafter the Afghans came like the waves of an incoming tide, each column advancing inland. Other Afghan tribes followed the Ghaznis: the Ghoris, Tughalaks, Surris and Lodhis. Between the successions of Afghan invasions came the terrible visitation in 1398 of the Mongol, Taimur. A hundred years later Babar, who was one of Taimur's descendants, started dreaming of an empire in India and made it a reality by setting up the most powerful and longest dynasty in the history of India.

What is certainly clear is that the Panjab, being the main gateway into the subcontinent, was fated to be the perpetual field of battle and the first home of all the conquerors. Few invaders, if any, brought wives with them, and most of those who settled in their conquered domains acquired local women. Thus the blood of many conquering races came to mingle, and many alien languages-Arabic, Persian, Pushto and Turkish-came to be spoken in the land. The Perso-Arabic word usage is "of considerable cultural, as well as, linguistic, interest" (Shackle[I], p.277).

x x x

The contributors of hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib hailed from different parts of the subcontinent; thus, most of their hymns have strong influence of their own mother tongue. Sadhu-Bhasha is employed often by most of them that is "a complex creation, made up of element from many different local areas and historical periods. Its core consist of words from the two closely related languages of his [Guru Nanak's] time perhaps best described as Old Panjabi and Old Western Hindi (Khari Boli)" (Shackle[I], p.8). The residence of various contributors and languages employed by them are cited in table 2 (Kapoor, p.20). Though this table is not fully accurate (to-date

information reveals that Guru Tegbahadur Sahib's bani is predominantly in Braj-Hindi; Baba Farid actually used Lehndi; Bhai Mardana is not a contributor-3 saloks generally attributed to him are by Guru Nanak Sahib; and so on), it gives a general idea of the diverse geographical backgrounds of the Contributors.

CONTRIBUTOR	AREA	LANGUAGE
Jaidev	Bengal	Bengali
Sain	Madhya Pradesh	Hindi
Parmanand, Pipa & Trilochan	Maharashtra	Marathi & Gujrati
Namdev	Maharashtra	Marathi, Gujrati, Persian and Arabic
Mardana, Sunar, Satta and Balwand	Panjab	Panjabi
Farid	Panjab	Panjabi
Bhatts	Panjab and Uttar Pradesh	Hindi & Punjabi
Dhanna	Rajasthan	Hindi
Sadna	Sindh	Sindhi
Kabir, Ravidas, Ramanand Beni, Bhikan & Surdas	Uttar Pradesh	Hindi, Braj & Sanskrit

[Table 2 : Contributors of Guru Granth Sahib]

Languages do not change their form overnight; it takes centuries for a language to adopt a recognizably different form. Each foreign invasion must surely have activated a change in the development of the existing languages of the land. Although there is some disagreement among scholars as to the exact timings of the existence of certain languages, there was in fact a process of evolution of the language(s) of the land is generally agreed upon.

1.4 Gurbani's Language

The cognitive view has been greatly influenced by the ideas of the American linguist and political commentator, Noam Chomsky, which regards a language as a part of any normal human being's

mental or psychological structure. Sahib Singh's monumental task "Gurbani Viakaran" had valuable service in this field through it presented a common grammar based on Panini's formulations for the whole of Gurbani. An alternative to which Harkirat Singh gives some attention to emphasizes the social nature of language, for instance studying the relationships between social structure and different dialects or varieties of a language in "Gurbani di Bhasha te Viakaran". In fact, the current trends in specific purpose language include not only grammatical, textual and functional knowledge, but also socio-linguistic knowledge comprising the following: dialects/varieties, registers, idiomatic expressions and cultural references (Douglas, p.35).

Keeping the above in mind, the language the Gurus composed their hymns in is not in any one standard language. Their objective was not to produce a complex literary work in the discipline of any standardized or primary language (i.e. the Vedas), which only a limited section of the society could comprehend. Prof. Harinder Singh 'Mehboob' in his monumental work Sahije Rachio Khalsa problems ('Mehboob', p.236) :

Guru Granth Sahib is an infinite prayer embracing only those parts of universal cultures, which have the potentialities to be generous, sublime and impartial. When compared to the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Vedas and the new Quran, Guru Granth Sahib is superior to them in the sense, that it admits no hegemonic intrusion, which may disturb the flow of its spiritual creativity.

The message in the Guru Granth Sahib is universal applied to people from all walks of life; it is not in interfaith scripture as coined by the neo-aesthetical phenomenon in contemporary parlance because "it contains perennial philosophy, uncontaminated by temporal and

secular matters. It is not a code of ethical conduct or social organization like Semitic Scriptures, though it strictly postulated a social context for practice of religion and enjoins strict, uncompromising and high-pitched ethical conduct, unamended by consideration of expediency of self-interest, and unbending on matters of principle" (Singh[6], pp. 175-6). The communicative modes used are a clear indication of this idea. Most of the compositions of the contributors of the Guru Granth Sahib are in what is known as 'Sadhu-Bhasha', which consists of one dominant language while words from other regional languages over the years become a part of that language (Singh [2], p. 14). For example one form of Sadhu-Basha is where the Panjabi language is dominant, however, words from Sanskrit, Pali, Braj, Persian, etc. may also become a part of it, 'Sadhu-Bhasha' had many different forms depending on the region and its dominant language.

Within the dimensions of time, society and the individual, linguistic variation come about and within which it persists. Hence, the social groups distinguished by language are based upon factors like geography, socio-economic status, and gender (Hudson, p.452). In view of factors such as language, religion, culture and the various thought systems of the audience, the message of the Gurus was conveyed in a language and vocabulary that the listener could understand and also had an emotional rapport with. The focus was on communicating the Revealed message for the spiritual and social upliftment of the listener.

In all languages change is systematic, pervasive as well as constant, affecting the lexicon (the inventory of morphemes) and all aspects of the grammar: phonology, morphology, and syntax. (Hudson, p.392-406) The characteristics of language change that it is systematic suggest that it is unlikely to be harmful. Its characteristics of constancy and pervasiveness suggest that language change is necessary, and

perhaps even useful. Hence, from the prescriptive of synchronic linguistic perspective, it is inaccurate to pronounce /s/ and /j/ (even/ ph/) phonemes as /sh/and/z(as/f), respectively (Singh [1], p.14). Gurbani was uttered at a time when modern Indo-Aryan languages were in the early development stage. These new languages were discarding their old attributes and acquiring new characteristics. For this reason, we can see examples of the older languages, Apbhransh and Prakrit, in Gurbani along with the modern languages such as Panjabi, Braj, etc. In Gurbani, we find words used both in their modified and developed form, as well as their original form (Singh[1], p.1). For the most part, Gurbani is in 'Sadhu-Bhasha', followed by Panjabi. In addition, there are also compositions in Braj Bhasha, Lehndi, and languages such as Sahaskriti and Gatha. There is also, one complete sabad and a few lines are in Persian. The sabads composed in Sanskrit are only by Bhagat Jaidev.

Let me re-iterate that it is important to note that 'Sadhu-Bhasha', which has no standard form, was widely understood in the Northern Hemisphere of India. So compositions of various forms in 'Sadhu-Bhasha' can be found composed by the same Guru or Bhagat (Singh[2], p. 15). Further, when it is said that a certain composition of Guru Nanak or any of the other contributors is in Panjabi, Braj etc. it does not necessarily mean that it is in the standard form of that language. "Guru Nanak makes no attempt, whatsoever, to separate the tatsum [original] forms of words from the tadbhava [modified] words, and uses them as they are spoken and understood by the people who he is primarily addressing in his particular composition" (Singh [7], pp. 179-80). Since vocabulary from several languages is used in Gurbani, more than one form of a word is present as well. In addition, to uphold the musical discipline, different forms of the same words are inscribed. In terms of phonology, the study of sound system

in particular language, there was not much difference between the Guru period and the Prakrits and Apbhransh (Singh[2], pp.14-5). However, in morphology certain notions stand out. "In Guru-period, there are multiple vowel-symbols used to articulate a particular case. Many words used in Gurbani are not used today in the same meaning. In some cases, the meaning has also changed" (Singh[2], p.18). Following are some examples of the different languages in the Guru Granth Sahib (Singh[2], pp.25-36).

1. Sadhu-Bhasha : Since there was no standard form of 'Sadhu-Bhasha', the vocabulary and idiom depended on the individual Guru or Bhagat.

ਕਰਉ ਬੇਨੰਤੀ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੀਤਾ ਸੰਤ ਟਹਲ ਕੀ ਬੇਲਾ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 13)

ਜਨਨੀ ਜਾਨਤ ਸੁਤੁ ਬਡਾ ਹੋਤੁ ਹੈ

ਇਤਨਾ ਕੁ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਜਿ ਦਿਨ ਦਿਨ ਅਵਧ ਘਟਤੁ ਹੈ॥

(ਕਬੀਰ, ਪੰਨਾ 91)

ਆਨੀਲੇ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਕਾਦੀਲੇ ਗੂਡੀ ਆਕਾਸ ਮਧੇ ਭਰਮੀਅਲੇ॥

(ਨਾਮਦੇਵ, ਪੰਨਾ 972)

ਗਉ ਭੈਸ ਮਗਉ ਲਾਵੇਰੀ॥ ਇਕ ਤਾਜਨਿ ਤੁਰੀ ਚੰਗੇਰੀ॥

(ਧੰਨਾ, ਪੰਨਾ 695)

In the above examples, Bhagat Namdev uses Marathi words such as "ਆਨੀਲੇ, ਕਾਦੀਲੇ" etc., whereas Bhagat Kabir uses words such as "ਹੋਤੁ ਹੈ, ਘਟਤੁ ਹੈ", which are representative of Northern Hindi. While Bhagat Dhanna uses Panjabi words such as : "ਲਾਵੇਰੀ, ਚੰਗੇਰੀ"

2. Panjabi : The folk forms of poetry have been used to explain Guru's message, i.e. in Vars, Barah Mahu, Alahunian, Ghorian, Sat Vara, Thitti, Rutti etc.

ਰਸ ਕਸ ਆਪੁ ਸਲਾਹਣਾ ਏ ਕਰਮ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਤਾਰ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ 15)

ਗਲਾ ਕਰੇ ਘਣੇਰੀਆ ਖਸਮ ਨਾ ਪਾਏ ਸਾਦੁ ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੨, ਪੰਨਾ 474)

ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਤੂ ਸਦਾ ਸਚੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੩, ਪੰਨਾ 918)

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਥੀਵੈ ਹਰਿਆ ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 1429)

3. Lehndi : A mixture of Pothohari, Multani and Jhangi and is probably the close to Sanskrit out of the Apbhransh. Compositions by Sheikh Farid, are in Lehndi, with emphasis on Multani with some mixture of Panjabi. Guru Arjan's composition under Dhakhne is also in Lehndi; actually it is completely in Multani dialect.

ਪਰਵਦਗਾਰ ਅਪਾਰ ਅਗਮ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਤੂੰ ॥

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਪਛਾਤਾ ਸਚੁ ਚੁੰਮਾ ਪੈਰ ਮੂੰ ॥

(ਬਾਬਾ ਫਰੀਦ, ਪੰਨਾ 488)

ਨੀਹੁ ਮਹਿੰਜਾ ਤਉ ਨਾਲਿ ਬਿਆ ਨੇਹ ਕੁੜਾਵੇ ਡੇਖੁ ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 1094)

4. Braj : It was spoken in the Northwestern Hemisphere of India, including Panjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, etc. and is similar to the modern Hindi language. All of Guru Teg Bahadur's hymns are in this language. Bhagat Ramanand also has one compositions in Braj mixed with Sadhu-Bhasha.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਜਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਲ ਕਉ ਮੀਨੁ ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੯, ਪੰਨਾ 1426)

ਕਤ ਜਾਈਐ ਰੇ ਘਰ ਲਾਗੇ ਰੰਗੁ ॥

(ਭਗਤ ਰਾਮਾਨੰਦ, ਪੰਨਾ 1195)

5. Sanskrit - An example in the spoken Sanskrit.

ਪਰਮਾਦਿ ਪੁਰਖਖ ਮਨੋਪਿਮੰ ਸਤਿ ਆਦਿ ਭਾਵ ਰਤੰ ॥

(ਭਗਤ ਜੈਦੇਵ, ਪੰਨਾ 526)

6. Persian - An example in spoken Persian.

ਯਕ ਅਰਜ ਗੁਫਤਮ ਪੇਸਿ ਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੋਸ ਕੁਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ 721)

7. Sahaskriti - A mixture of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit along with Panjabi and Hindi; Guru Arjan named it Sahakriti.

ਜੇ ਜਾਣਸਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰ ਕਰਮੰ॥ ਸਭਿ ਫੋਕਟ ਨਿਸਚਉ ਕਰਮੰ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ 470)

ਦਇਆਲ ਏਕ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਪੁਰਖਹ, ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਅ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲਕਹ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 1355)

8. Gatha - Sahaskriti with minor differences. Gatha was rejected by the Brahmins as inferior to Sanskrit; Guru Arjan states that Gatha is a difficult language, which only those with rare caliber are capable of understanding.

ਗਾਥਾ ਗੂੜ ਅਪਾਰੰ, ਸਮਝਣੰ ਬਿਰਲਾ ਜਨਹ॥

ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕਾਮ ਤਜਣੰ॥

(ਮਹਲਾ ੫, ਪੰਨਾ 1360)

Actually, Sahaskriti and Gatha are the varieties of Prakrit (Singh[5],p.40)

1.5 “Language” in Gurbani

The power language gives us is, indeed, so great, the Guru Granth Sahib tells us. In short, the nature and dominance of the way of life that the ‘Creation’ leads is due in very large part to the fact that we communicate, albeit many a times a subservience. All citations from the Guru Granth Sahib using the word “language”, for reference purpose, are (Khalsa, 1-1430):

- ♦ And now we speak of the realm of spiritual wisdom. So many winds, waters and fires.....So many ways of life, so many languages. So many dynasties of rulers. So many intuitive people, so many selfless servants. O Nanak, His limit has no limit! (Guru Nanak, p.7).

- ♦ The stars, the moon and sun mediate on Him; the earth and the sky sing to Him. All the sources of creation, and all languages mediate on Him, forever and ever.... O Nanak, He is met in the Society of the Saints. (Guru Arjan, p.456).
- ♦ Those who know the Shastras and the Vedas, astrology and the rules of grammar of many languages; those who know Tantras and mantras and all medicines- even they shall die in end. (Bhagat Kabir, p.477).
- ♦ The K'shatriya have abandoned their religion, and have adopted a foreign language. The whole world has been reduced to the same social status; the state of righteousness and Dharma has been lost. (Guru Nanak, p.663).
- ♦ The sun and the moon are the two lamps that shine, with the four corners of the world placed between them. The ten senses are the dancing girls, and the five passions are the chorus; they sit together within the one body. They all put on their own shows, and speak in different languages (Guru Arjan, p.884).

Gurbani is purely religious (spiritual and political); it contains vocabulary concerning all aspects of culture. The doctrinal terminology not only utilizes the words from the existing traditions like Vedanta (maya, atma, brahm). Yoga (anahad sabad, dasvan duar, nau nidhi) and Bhakti movement (nij-ghar, simran, bhaujal), but also peculiar to the Sikh parlance (haumai, manmukh, gurprasadi). Specifically, the terms concerning government, administration, agriculture, business, domestic and married life, weather, nature, landscape and many other fields of human experience are available (Singh [3], p.369). Further elaborative study is warranted on this.

1.6 Conclusions

Language is not a natural phenomenon, rather it is the creation of a particular society. If it were a natural phenomenon, there would

have been only one word for a particular thing. Furthermore, language also changes with time and region, i.e. the Panjabi spoken today is very different from the one five centuries ago. While trying to understand the language of Gurbani, it must be kept in mind that it is four to seven centuries old, and hence, cannot be interpreted with the rules of contemporary languages. Since, Gurbani's language utilizes several different languages, it causes the complexity in the grammar of Gurbani. In addition the poetic aspect of the Gurbani defies the established grammar patterns or rules.

Guru Granth Sahib is a treasury- of old dialects and languages. The contributors (Gurus, Bhagats and Devotees) used their mother tongue in addition to the Sadhu-Bhasha in their verses. The oldest specimen of the language is from the 12th century by Bhagat Jaidev whereas the latest is from the 17th century by Guru Tegh Bahadur. At minimum, the Guru Granth Sahib is certainly one of the world's greatest bank of atavistic languages: anthology of divine poetry and repository of classical music. Human consciousness witnesses in Guru Granth Sahib the uniqueness of Scriptural status comprising the exuberant excellence of soul, body and society.

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